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MY STRANGE PATIENT.

I.

CHANCE, or, to speak more accurately, a series of those jests of fate we call chance, made me one of the ship's company of the stanch clipper *Mary Peck*, bound from New York to Valparaiso. A week before that bright windy March day when she spread her broad wings and caught the ocean swell off Sandy Hook, nothing had been further from my thoughts than a voyage round the Horn. A trip by balloon, an exploration of African wilds, or a raid on the North Pole would have seemed a proposition as feasible as this venture to the southward, to a young physician struggling ineffectually to prove that the community had need of him and that the years of preparation for his profession had not been thrown away.

It was chance the first that Captain Abner Peck should come back from a voyage to the west coast to find the wife of his bosom in failing health, and to resolve to take her with him on his next run to the farther side of the sister continent. It was chance the second that, in his anxiety for his spouse, the skipper should decide to ship a surgeon: as part owner of the *Mary Peck*, he was entitled to some luxuries. It was chance the third that the captain and I, Alfred Morris, M.D., should meet at the house of a friend in the New England city in which I was striving to earn my daily bread; and it may have been chance the fourth that we fraternized with uncommon cordiality. The seaman told me something of his plans; I confided to him the story of a few skirmishes of my up-hill fight. The talk ended in his making a definite proposition. I asked forty-eight hours to consider it—and accepted it in twelve. In going to sea I gave up little. A few patients, chronic as to maladies and uncertain as to payments, would be forced to seek a new medical adviser: in exchange for them, I bargained for passage on a fine ship, forgetfulness of the landlord bugbear, and pay sufficient to

supply spending-money at the ports we might touch at and to bring me home with a little loose silver in my pockets.

Once the die was cast, the thought of the voyage filled me with glee; for it offered a first prospect of adventure, though from boyhood mine had been an existence of vicissitudes. Left an orphan in childhood, I had grown up into my teens under the care of an uncle, an elderly bachelor, who treated me with a mixture of the fondness he felt for kinsfolk and the distrust he manifested toward those debarred from the suffrage by circumstance of age or sex. He did not understand children, and he feared women. He owned a small factory in Rodneytown, a village on the New England coast which had closed its days of progress about the middle of the century, but which still maintained activity enough to keep it alive. My uncle seldom attempted to interfere with my amusements, which, as it happened, generally took me out of his sight and hearing, thereby, no doubt, gaining his tacit approval. I was a rather solitary little fellow in those days, with a liking for prowling about the fields and along the beach or paddling a crazy raft up and down the shallow tidal streams in which the neighborhood abounded, and on the banks of the largest of which Rodneytown was built. Behind the village rose a long low ridge, and beyond that in turn was a rolling country, well wooded and fairly fertile. Between the ridge and the beach stretched lowlands fringed on the seaward side with salt marshes, and penetrated in many places by the tidal creeks of which mention has been made. For farming purposes the lowlands were of little value, and at no time had they many dwellers. In fact, to this day there is scarcely a habitation to be found from one end of the plain to the other, though a little way up the slope of the ridge which bounds it are several clusters of farm-houses.

I found a fascination of a kind, in this waste region, which seemed to belong hardly more to the land than to the sea; and I spent many happy days exploring it. Here and there, rising from the marsh, were rocky hillocks, steep-sided, and dotted with dwarfed trees and bushes wherever, by accident, sufficient soil had collected to give the roots a covering. On one of these islands—as they may be called for want of a better term—I discovered a house, old, and long untenanted, but not dilapidated. Why its builder had chosen its site as he had was not to be explained, for he had long been dead and buried; but his work remained to prove that he, like most of his contemporaries, had been an honest constructor. This old house enchanted my fancy. To the east it commanded a view of the bay, a broad expanse of water sheltered from ocean gales by a long cape jutting out from the mainland some miles to the south and then curving so as to extend almost parallel with the line of the inner beach. To the west was the plain, and beyond it the ridge. To the north and south was the amphibious region where marsh and dry land joined. But the great attraction of the place was its isolation. Nobody dreamed of invading my retreat, and there I could imagine myself monarch of all I surveyed, ruling a realm so deserted that the very loneliness of it, for which I loved it, sometimes terrified me.

My uncle's death, cutting short my stay in Rodneytown, led to my

removal to the far different scenes of a small city in central Illinois, where dwelt another of my father's brothers, a childless widower. He was an austere man, intensely practical, and well calculated to cure me of the romantic moods I had learned to cherish, had we but come to terms of affection. Unluckily, however, we had too little in common to reach even amity. At eighteen I was told that the time for study was over, that the time for toil had arrived. He took me into his shop—he was a merchant in a small way—and for a year strove zealously to discover some trace of business capacity in his assistant. Failing utterly in this, he called me before him, gravely passed his verdict on my manifold deficiencies, and inquired whether I had any plans in mind.

One of my friends—a few had been acquired, perhaps by force of circumstances—had entered a medical school in a neighboring city; and, on the spur of the moment, I elected to follow his example. My guardian—he held that post in virtue of the small estate left to me by my first protector—offered no objections, though he gave formal notice that the funds in his possession would hardly suffice to do more than carry me through the school. Undeterred by the warning, I matriculated, and for two years studied faithfully, receiving a degree at the end of the second, and thus becoming entitled legally to experiment on humanity. As, by virtue of strict economy, there was still some money to my credit, I determined to spend a year at a famous Eastern school; and I carried out the plan, only to meet one of the keenest of disappointments, at the close of the period, through failing to secure a coveted appointment as a hospital interne.

Just at this time, too, came news of the death of my uncle. He bequeathed to me a letter of sound advice and a thousand dollars. By means of the latter—and disregarding the former—I spent a fourth year in study, this time selecting another of the great institutions. The balance left at the end of the season served to equip a modest office in the city, in which Captain Peck found me, just entering my twenty-fifth year, with resources exhausted, and hopes blighted by the dreary waiting for paying patients who did not come. Add to these troubles a share of anxiety as to my health, and one can understand the willingness with which I became surgeon of the *Mary Peck*.

She was almost a new ship, Maine-built, Yankee-officered, and manned by a crew representing many nations. She was of about a thousand tons' burden, and was freighted with a cargo of considerable value. Her living-quarters aft were comfortable, if not luxurious, and the cabin fare was excellent. The captain and his wife, the two mates and I, made up the population of that part of the vessel.

The *Mary Peck's* run to the equator was made in circumstances of the sort to delight both the skipper and the pair who were making their first deep-water voyage. Barring a sharp gale soon after she cleared the coast, the ship encountered fine weather down to the line, with plenty of wind, but not too much of it,—a very important qualification in the eyes of the novices. As the days grew warmer Mrs. Peck throve amazingly, the color came back to her cheeks, and her strength increased, until we almost forgot that she had begun the voyage

an invalid. She herself credited Old Ocean with her improvement, and the captain was much of her way of thinking, while my notion of the matter was that the companionship of her tall, bronzed husband counted for more with the little woman than sea-air and sunshine combined. At all events, however, the surgeon's post promised to be a sinecure.

To the line, as has been said, Fortune showered her favors upon us, but no sooner was our prow cleaving the waters of the Southern hemisphere than the gifts of the fickle goddess ceased. For a fortnight we had calms or breezes so faint as hardly to give the ship steerage-way. Yet she contrived to crawl on, daily putting some leagues of her road behind her; for her master was a smart seaman and made the most of every cat's-paw. Nevertheless it was slow work, and all of us longed for cooler days and fresh winds with an invigorating keenness in their rush.

I was leaning against the rail one night, lingering beyond the usual hour and loath to quit the coolness of the deck, when the captain came up, and, standing beside me, lighted a cigar. The night was still and moonlit, and the ship lay almost motionless.

"Still ocean holiday weather," said I. "Do you look for much more of it?"

"I hope not," said he, emphatically. "It's the sort of holiday that's worse than labor."

"And when steam discounts canvas."

"Yes," he observed; "it's enough to make one pray for engine and screw. But perhaps I ought not to complain. My wife certainly seems none the worse for this drifting in the tropics."

"She stands the heat well, no doubt of that," said I. "In fact, she takes most kindly to the sea. I wonder you've never had her with you before."

"Wait till we're on the other side of the Horn, and then see if your opinion's the same."

"It will be a long time to wait, at this rate of sailing. So far I've had only one cause to find the ocean disappointing. I've looked forward to all sorts of incidents, but not one has occurred."

"Wait till we're in the Pacific before you reach conclusions. By the way, what manner of incident might you crave?"

"Anything not too perilous. You know the list better than I."

"I'm willing to avoid them all this voyage," he answered, with a laugh. "Still, if any excitement occurs you shall be notified promptly."

"On the strength of the promise, I'll turn in," said I, and, leaving him to finish his cigar, made my way below, to toss and turn in my bunk for a time, and then to fall into a restless slumber. Presently, as it seemed, from the drowsiness which was heavy upon me, though the summons was loud enough to wake the soundest of sleepers, the steward rapped upon the door. The daylight in the state-room proved that, after all, the night had passed only too quickly.

"What's the matter?" I called out, convinced that the man must have blundered and called me at least an hour too early.

"The cap'n requests you to step on deck to onct," he answered.

"What for?" I demanded; but the steward had gone his way, and there was no answer.

Pulling on a pair of trousers and a jacket, I hastened to obey the skipper's orders. As I reached the deck I caught sight of a little knot of men about a figure lying motionless on a grating. Kneeling at the side of the prostrate man was a woman, and a little forward two strange sailors were surrounded by half a dozen of the ship's crew.

"Here's business for you, doctor," was Captain Peck's greeting. "That incident you were longing for last night has occurred fast enough."

"What's happened?" I asked. "Who are these people?"

"We've just picked them up," he answered. "Their boat is towing alongside now. They are from a small Portuguese steamer, the *Nina* or *Nita*, from Lisbon for Rio, destroyed by fire two days ago. There were four of them in the boat we fell in with, two sailors and two passengers. That man lying there has a broken leg,—got it by a fall in leaving the steamer, tumbled into the boat, in fact,—and he seems to be in a mighty bad way. We hoisted him aboard as easily as possible, but he fainted from pain while we were doing it. He needs your attention badly."

And truly his need was great,—a fracture of the tibia and two days in an open boat with only the rudest treatment for his injury. A glance at the swollen limb was enough to tell the story of his hours of torture.

He was a tall, fine-looking man, of middle age, with well-cut features and a close-cropped dark beard. His dress, disordered as it was, showed him to be a person of wealth.

"Best get him below at once," said I. "He's in for a siege, no doubt of that."

"Put him in the state-room forward of the first mate's," said the captain. "Bear a hand here, a couple of you fellows."

Two of the sailors came aft, and carefully raised the injured man. With the skipper and myself assisting in the operation, he was carried to the quarters assigned him. He moaned feebly as the men lifted him from the grating, and again as they felt their way down the companion-stairs, but, on the whole, the job was well done. Then came the labor, which was particularly my own, of reducing the inflammation, of getting the leg into splints, and of making the patient as comfortable as circumstances permitted. At last I was able to report that, all things considered, he was doing very well.

"That's good news," said the captain, heartily. "By the way, did you learn anything about him or the loss of the steamer?"

"Only that, though he is a Brazilian, he speaks English like a Briton. The lady, who seems to be a relation of his, knows nothing but her own tongue. She's with him now, watching him, although there's nothing for her to do."

"You learned his name?"

"Yes; Perez."

"So much I've extracted from the sailors," said Captain Peck, "but very little else, except that, when the rush was made to leave the steamer, our friends were almost left behind. Most of the crew and passengers got away in three other boats. The one we met was the last to pull away from the steamer. That's the limit of information to be had from the men."

"I suppose that nothing has been seen of the other boats?"

"Nothing. I'll do my best to find them, but it's not likely we'll come across them. The people we have on board lost trace of them the first night. God pity the poor souls crowded into those three boats!"

The captain was as good as his word, and, aided by a light breeze which came as opportunely as if designed to assist in this errand of mercy, the *Mary Peck* cruised about in search of the flotilla. Nothing was seen of it, however, and when, after lying becalmed for two days more, her sails were again filled by the wind, her bow was turned to the south, and once more she was headed for her destination. Long afterward it was learned that an English ship had rescued the occupants of the boats on the day following that on which the steamer was burned, and had carried them to London.

As we drew into cooler latitudes Perez mended steadily, although, as may be imagined, his recovery was a tedious business. Yet, in view of his condition when he was hoisted to the deck of the *Mary Peck*, neither he nor I could find cause for complaint. For six weeks he was confined to his state-room, and in that time I came to know him well and to like him exceedingly. Of himself he said little, but, bit by bit, I learned something of his history. His father was a Brazilian, but his mother was English, and the greater part of his youth was spent at English schools. Since attaining manhood he had lived near Rio, making an occasional trip to Europe. The lady in his charge on the homeward voyage which had been interrupted so disastrously was a cousin, who, after some years in Portugal, was returning to her own country. She was not very young, and her beauty was of the faded sort. In spite of the drawback that neither she nor Mrs. Peck was mistress of the other's tongue, the two women managed to strike up a great friendship and to comfort one another vastly in the days of great gales and high seas we encountered off the cape. But the ship fought her way through the storms of that stormiest of regions into the Pacific, and at last her anchor was dropped in Valparaiso Bay, after a passage which, south of the line, had been prolonged far beyond her master's expectations.

There had been no opportunity to transfer Perez to a vessel bound for Rio, and perforce he had been carried to the Chilean port. On the day of our arrival, however, he and his companion bade us farewell and were sent aboard a steamer which, an hour later, bore them out of the bay. Our parting was that of friends who could hardly hope to meet again. Yet it was fated that a meeting should come, and that, too, at an early date.

II.

Again the Mary Peck was ploughing the waves of the Atlantic. Favoring breezes on the Pacific, a fierce but short-lived storm off the Horn, then a half-gale which drove her at top speed along that roughest of ocean highways,—such was the story of the beginning of her homeward voyage. But now the cape had been rounded and the ship was pressing northward toward warmer latitudes and less tempestuous seas. Everybody aft was in the best of spirits, as I well remember.

It was evening. Mrs. Peck and I were reading in the cabin, when the captain left the deck and joined us. The hanging lamp showed drops of spray glistening on his cap and heavy jacket, and no wonder, for a strong, keen wind was sweeping up out of the southwest, and, though the ship was running before it, one could guess that her deck was far from dry.

"You two are looking cheery and home-like down here," said the skipper. "I tell you a warm cabin's no bad place on a night like this. There's an edge to this breeze that, even if we miss half the force of it, cuts to the bone. How'd you like to be standing watch, doctor?"

"This is better, thank you," said I; "better for the present, at least. I dare say it won't be long before the deck will have the preference."

"Not if our luck holds. Do you believe in luck, doctor?"

"Yes, most firmly," said I. The question recalled most unpleasantly the tribulations of life on shore which, for a little, I had shaken off, but to which a return was inevitable.

"And so do I," said the skipper. "Still, with Mary with us we can't meet any great misfortune. Old Ocean wouldn't be malicious enough to build up her health only to make her fate a shipwreck."

His eyes met his wife's for an instant: the look on the faces of the two revealed that, notwithstanding their wedding-day was far behind them, they were still lovers.

"Take off those wet things, dear," she said. "Surely you can spare us a half-hour. You're not needed on deck all the time."

"I'll be with you in two minutes," he answered, cheerily. His hand was on the latch of his state-room door, when there came a shock which almost knocked him from his feet. A tremor ran through the fabric of the vessel. Then there were shouts from above and the noise of men running along the deck.

Mrs. Peck started from her seat, her hands clasped, and her lips moving, though no sound came from them. I had sprung after the captain toward the companion-way, but he turned upon me fiercely.

"Look after my wife," he cried. "Don't leave her, man. Back with you."

And back I went, though truly it was little in my power to comfort her. Yet I strove to reassure her, as if a frightened woman could be cheered by an equally frightened man. Neither of us knew what had happened. In our ignorance we could only dread horrors none the less terrifying for the indefiniteness of them. So for many minutes we sat, pale and trembling at the prospect of dangers we knew not what.

But the motion of the ship and the tell-tale compass showed that she was still speeding on her course, and after a time the fact began to revive our courage. At last—how long the interval seemed there is no need of relating—Captain Peck rejoined us.

"What was it, Abner?" gasped his wife. "What was it?"

"Here, here, that won't do," he answered. "Don't worry. We're still afloat, and likely to keep afloat, which is more to the point."

"Then, what has happened?" I broke in.

"We struck something. Just what we don't know, but something quite awash, for nobody saw anything of it. Whatever it was, we must have sent it to the bottom. None of the men caught even a glimpse of the thing as we went over it."

"A derelict?"

"Perhaps. However, we're not badly damaged, so far as can be discovered. There's no danger."

With a great sigh of relief, his wife sank back in her seat. Her husband bent over her and kissed her.

"Don't let her get down-hearted, doctor," said he. "She's a brave little woman if she has only half a chance. Remember, both of you, we're not sinking, but afloat in as sound a ship as ever was sent off the ways. And now I've got to go on deck again."

In spite of the confidence he felt, or assumed, there was little rest for us that night. Morning, to be sure, showed the vessel apparently uninjured, at least to unskilled eyes, though one could not help noticing that the faces of the mates were unusually grave, and that the men talked earnestly among themselves. The pumps had been going during the night, as I knew, and now, at intervals, the clank of them penetrated the cabin. Nevertheless, the captain again and again declared that there was no danger, until by force of repetition he succeeded in allaying the fears of his wife.

We held the breeze for three days. Then followed a gale of twenty hours' duration, which left behind it an ugly sea. The next morning the pumps were going steadily. The cold had moderated sensibly, and from under the lee of a boat I enjoyed a pipe and watched the men at the brakes. After a little the skipper, who had been standing near the wheel, crossed over to me.

"Doctor," he said, "I've something to tell you. It is better for you to learn it now than to come at it after a while by guess-work. We've changed our course and are headed for Rio."

"Then the ship's injury is greater than you supposed?" I asked, with all my old terrors aroused.

"Yes. We have been leaking forward ever since the collision. The pitching and rolling in yesterday's blow increased the trouble and made my duty clear. I want you to understand this and to aid me in keeping up my wife's spirits. Make her believe that seeking port for repairs is more of an extra precaution than a necessity."

"I'll do my best," I promised, and, though my success was doubtful, I honestly strove to aid the captain's designs. Of the anxious days of that run to Rio there is little to record; but reach it we did at length, with the pumps going, the men almost worn out, and the ship

showing a good deal less freeboard than she had displayed in the Pacific. We learned, soon after our arrival, that Perez was out of the city, and that it was uncertain when he would return. The work of repairs on the ship was pushed, for her master was desirous to lose as little time as possible. There were some cases of fever reported among the shipping, and once or twice I was called aboard vessels to prescribe for men lying ill of the disease. I doubt whether my ministrations had much effect, Yellow Jack being then more of a stranger to me than was the case somewhat later. While spending a day ashore I was seized by the fever. I was hurried to a hospital, there to fight my battle with the grim enemy. The struggle was so close, as I learned afterward, that probably it would have gone against me, had not Perez, returning to Rio, got news of my attack and secured for me all that money could command in the way of treatment and attendance; and when I was convalescent he took me to his fine estate in the highlands. The Mary Peck by this time was well on her way to New York, her captain easy in the knowledge that he had left his surgeon in good hands.

Of the weeks passed as Perez's guest I shall ever cherish a grateful remembrance. His kindness was unvarying, his generosity unlimited. He had obtained a very fair notion of my slender prospects, and gladly would have aided me to seek fortune in Brazil, had not the physicians strongly advised against my attempting to remain there. Accordingly, he was forced to content himself with arrangements for my passage home, which he decided should be made by way of England. He would have done more, and pressed upon me money, which would have been a welcome addition to my resources, had I not refused to increase my obligations to him.

"Obligations!" he objected. "Don't let me hear you mention obligations. Fate has brought us together twice. You think that on the second occasion you have become my debtor, but I know that on the first I incurred a debt to you which can never be liquidated. How would I have fared had I not received skilful treatment after the crew of your ship hoisted me out of the boat in which I had suffered tortures? It was the one chance in the hundred that the rescuing vessel carried a surgeon. There was fate in it; there was fate in the accident which drove the Mary Peck to Rio. It may be destiny that even for a third time we shall be of service the one to the other."

"I trust that if the opportunity comes it will be mine," said I; "but our lives promise to be spent far apart."

"Even so. But the chain of destiny sometimes links the most remote."

Evidently a feeling possessed him that our connection was not to end with the good-byes spoken on the steamer which was to bear me from Rio. He asked many questions about my plans, until from the answers he perceived that I was turning homeward almost without an idea of the manner of existence before me. Then the talk drifted to the sorry experiences of my professional career and to the errant character of my boyhood existence. He was a sympathetic listener to a description of the old village on the New England coast and the lonely house, surrounded by the marsh, which had been my favorite

retreat. Under the spur of memory, I told him much of the abandoned dwelling and of its isolation.

"If ever I come to be a misanthrope," I declared, "let me retire thither, assured that I may remain undisturbed so long as I choose. Yet, if my mood changes, it will be but a step, and again I shall be among my fellows."

"Truly an admirable hermitage," he observed.

"Indeed it is. The villagers take no interest in the old place. Though near them, it is out of their way, and there is no reason why they should visit it. They are not people of the sort to waste energy in tramping through salt bogs. A man who settled there might feel tolerably certain that they would not attempt to intrude upon him."

We were silent for a time, but at length I asked whether he might not visit the United States.

"It is hardly on the cards," he answered. "It is not probable that I shall quit Brazil for some time to come. I have interests to be guarded which would suffer in my absence. The country is on the eve of a revolution; the empire is doomed, and its fall cannot be long delayed. Under the surface there are plots and counterplots. I have striven to keep clear of them, and have succeeded, so far as active participation is concerned; but I have had knowledge of a number of them, and many of my closest friends are deeply involved. The nation's need is a strong, stable government. God knows how we are to obtain it, or what the history of the next few years will be."

Before we separated for the night an agreement had been made which afterward seemed curious enough, though at the time we entered into it with the utmost gravity. It was, in brief, that in case either had an urgent request to make of the other, and the request was made by letter, there should be used, either as a signature or appended to the writer's name, a symbol, a Greek cross with three dots ranged vertically to the right of it. Perhaps it was Perez's earnestness as we talked over the matter which prevented me from appreciating its strangeness. A little reflection might have persuaded me that we were wasting our breath, for it was difficult to understand how I, in my poverty and powerlessness, could ever aid one who possessed so much of the resources I lacked; but, under the influence of my friend's grave face and words, a pledge to heed his call was given as solemnly as if the alliance were one of equals.

The following day, a passenger on the steamer *Bedouin*, I leaned upon the vessel's rail and watched the Brazilian highlands growing less and less in the distance.

III.

The *Bedouin*, her size and accommodations considered, had but a small number of cabin passengers. All told, there were hardly a score, including six or seven women, who were invisible save when the sea was at its smoothest. Even when they joined the rest at dinner we barely filled two tables. Among the men were two or three English-

men, a half-dozen Brazilians, a Frenchman, and two Germans. The women apparently represented almost as great a variety of nationalities. Only two of them had any claims to youth. In the matter of beauty the average was low. The most ardent of wooers of old buccaneering days, when suits were pressed with rare despatch, would have turned a very St. Anthony at sight of such an array of elderly femininity as the Bedouin presented.

The two girls, however, were of uncommon attractiveness. One was a Brazilian maiden, a fine brunette, with a figure inclined to the statuesque in its outlines. The other, so nearly as I could discover from an occasional glimpse of her in the course of the first two days of the voyage, was a slender, graceful girl, brown-haired, and neither very dark nor very light of complexion. She was travelling in company with an older woman, attendance upon whom kept her fully employed for forty-eight hours out of port. Then, as the weather was fine, the pair appeared on deck and joined the party under the big awning aft. Each carried a book, but it was noticeable that, while the elder read steadily and rapidly, with the business-like air of a hardened devourer of novels, the girl often dropped her book upon her lap and let her gaze stray across the wide expanse of blue water. Seemingly she took little heed of her fellow-voyagers, a group of whom were chatting not a dozen feet from her. It was an excellent opportunity to study her without her knowledge—as I believed; and the longer I watched the young woman the more interested in her did I become.

She was slender, as has been said, and carried herself so erectly as to appear taller than she really was, her height being, in fact, but a trifle above the average of her sex. Her forehead was broad, and her hair worn low upon it. Her features were good. The nose was straight and finely chiselled, the chin delicately rounded. Her mouth was larger than the canons of art demanded, and now and then the lips were set in a line which indicated no lack of firmness. It was not a stubborn mouth, however, even when the thoughts of its mistress seemed to be least pleasant. The face was inclined to paleness, relieved by a faint flickering color which came and went on her cheeks, even as she sat watching the sea. The eyes gave her strongest claim to beauty. They were clear, dark brown eyes shaded by long lashes.

As a whole, the face was attractive, but it was no easy task to class its degree of pulchritude. Absolute beauty it did not attain; "pretty" was clearly not the adjective to apply to it. "Handsome" seemed to be closer to the truth, though even that word did not quite satisfy my judgment. But I did not ponder long over the point, for I soon found myself fully decided that the girl was, in appearance at least, a very charming young person.

Burroughs, a British youth with whom I had struck up an acquaintance in the smoking-room, crossed the deck to her chair, and talked with her for perhaps a quarter of an hour, the novel-reader merely looking up from her book on his approach and promptly returning to its perusal after answering his greeting. I envied Burroughs's acquaintance with the girl, although neither he nor she seemed to derive any great entertainment from their somewhat intermittent

conversation. Once she sent a quick glance in my direction, and I guessed that the youth had reached me in going over the list of passengers. I prayed that he might be charitable in his comments.

Strolling into the smoking-room that evening, I found most of the male passengers there assembled. Two games of cards were in progress, with a fringe of spectators looking over the players' shoulders. After a few minutes Burroughs appeared, and dropped upon the cushioned bench beside me.

"Not playing, eh?" said he. "Don't you admire the sport?"

"Not particularly," I answered. "Are you going to take a hand?"

"I like to, generally," said he, with a laugh, "but I'd rather do something else just now."

"Smoke, for instance?" I suggested.

"Not exactly," he answered, with a sort of embarrassment in his tone. "By the way, wouldn't you like to meet your fair compatriot?"

"Who is she?" I had supposed myself to be the only North American on board."

"Miss Dorothy Gray. If you happened to notice, you saw me talking to her this afternoon. She's with her aunt, Mrs. Loring,—met 'em in Rio, you know. I told her who you were, and she'll be glad to see you. Come along, that's a good fellow."

"Why this haste?" But I rose without delay, as he might have observed, had he not been busy with his own schemes.

"It's something like this, you know," he went on. "That splendid creature with a name I can't pronounce is with Miss Gray now, and until I get somebody to look after the little Yankee, you know, I can't have the splendid creature to myself. I don't speak much of her lingo, you see, and she can't make even a stagger at mine, and so our conversation is rather embarrassing before a third party, don't you know? I'm counting on you to help me out."

"Lead the way," said I. "I'm a willing sacrifice."

In five minutes I found myself talking to Miss Gray, while at a little distance Burroughs and the fair Brazilian were progressing famously in spite of the lingual limitations. Still farther away the buxom mother of the splendid creature was playing a discreet chaperon and discoursing with one of her countrymen.

There was a glorious moon overhead, and the steamer ran smoothly over the tranquil sea. These details come back to me far more distinctly than the words of folly, commonplace, or wisdom we may have exchanged. Probably we talked of the ship, the officers, and the passengers, of Brazil and the United States, and, last but not least, of the beauty and charm of the night. The girl had something white and fluffy thrown over her head, and her light jacket was buttoned about her trim figure, for the evening air was cool, in spite of our latitude. The moonlight was kind to her, as it is to so many of her sisters, and had I attempted to revise my afternoon's opinion of her face, my new finding, I fear, would have been far less severely critical.

In that first evening I came to like her exceedingly. There was nothing of the coquette in her; in fact, there was hardly a touch of frivolity. She seemed grave rather than gay, although one got from

her no suggestion of a morose disposition. In short, there was something in her manner to bring to mind the self-repression one often notes in persons long accustomed to close attendance upon an exacting invalid. As it happened, she came rightfully by this air, inasmuch as her aunt was a chronic searcher for the health which she believed herself to lack. With this aunt Miss Gray had been travelling for several years.

When she bade me good-night I gave an hour to tobacco and Burroughs, who chattered enthusiastically about the flower of Brazil. Incidentally, he explained that he had met Mrs. Loring and her niece but once before the Bedouin sailed, and that he knew next to nothing of them.

"The old lady's a queer one, though," he added. "If you confess that you're a doctor she'll make your life a burden, you know. Shun her, old chappie, shun her."

Events proved that, even had I been disposed to accept his advice, it would have been extremely difficult to put it into practice. Mrs. Loring gave me no option in the matter. No sooner did she discover my profession—and that she did speedily—than she sent for me. I found her propped up on pillows in her berth, with a novel in one hand and a fan in the other.

"So kind of you, Dr. Morris, so very, very kind," she began,—“so kind to come so soon. Really, I was in despair, yes, in abject despair, until I heard that you were a physician. I am so ill, so miserably ill, doctor, and the ship's surgeon misjudges my case so terribly. Would you believe it,—can you believe it?—he actually tried to humbug me into thinking that I was well, perfectly well. And I—I—”

She fell back upon her pillows, as if overpowered by the remembrance of her sufferings. Yet in a moment she was again sitting up and pouring into my ears a torrent of words. She was a tall woman, thin, though not emaciated, very nervous, and one of the most voluble persons it was ever my fate to encounter. Her age was not far from forty-five years.

In spite of her repeated assertions that she was very ill, and the evident faith she put in them, it was clear that Mrs. Loring might as well have been on deck as in her state-room. An undue indulgence in certain triumphs of the ship's pastry-cook, and an overtaxed digestion, would explain her ailment to the satisfaction of anybody but herself. The surgeon's view of the matter, expressed rather brusquely, had served to convince the lady that he was a brute. Perhaps had she been a lone traveller she might have had occasion to put me in the same category; but, with one thought for her and two for her niece, I listened patiently to the tale of sorrow and agony.

"Well, Mrs. Loring," said I, when the opportunity came, "I think I have diagnosed your case. With your co-operation, we'll have you well again long before this voyage is over. I'll prepare some medicine which I think will be effective. I shall have to ask you to put yourself on a restricted diet, in order that the delicate chemical changes which I count upon the medicine to produce as an aid to the digestive ferments may progress under the most favorable conditions. The dose will be a teaspoonful just half an hour before each meal. So

accurately calculated are the effects that I must ask you to follow the directions to the minute. The slightest variation in the time may utterly destroy the efficacy of the drugs."

"Oh, you may rely upon me, doctor," she cried, delightedly. "I understand you perfectly,—yes, perfectly. To the minute, to the very minute, the medicine shall be taken. Oh, doctor, doctor, it is a comfort, such a comfort, to see that you understand my trouble so thoroughly,—yes, so thoroughly. Now, that surgeon——"

But I bowed myself out of the state-room, and hastened in search of the official medicine-man, who, it must be admitted, learned with entire satisfaction that another had assumed charge of Mrs. Loring's case. Moreover, he cheerfully assisted in the preparation of the medicine for her use. It was warranted to be harmless; it tasted much as if a little sugar had been dissolved in a generous quantity of water. As it met the patient's craving for doses, however, and as she was up and about again in the course of a few days, it may be said to have accomplished its benevolent purpose.

In the mean time Miss Gray and I were getting on famously. We walked the deck together, we hazarded small bets on the steamer's daily run, and we shared in the somewhat limited list of mid-ocean amusements. While the moonlight evenings lasted, we gave the Queen of Night every chance in the world to exercise her mischievous sway; but for once, at least, her powers failed. I do not mean to suggest that our conversation was always coldly matter-of-fact. A vein of sentiment ran through it at times, but on the whole we kept well within the bounds of every-day friendship, which for two young persons placed as we were approached the remarkable. There were confidences exchanged, to be sure, or, to speak more precisely, she heard a good deal of my experiences and hopes and she confided to me a little of hers. It may be that the difference was due to the subtle power she possessed of arousing in others faith of the sort which leads to such confessions. Thus it came to pass that she acquired a fairly accurate idea of the life I had led and of the problems which confronted me, while I learned only the outlines of her story. Her parents were dead, and for the last dozen years she had been with her aunt, who was a childless widow. Never the possessor of vigorous health, Mrs. Loring had gradually worried herself into the conviction that she was a mere physical wreck. Having no home ties, and being able to indulge in a liking for travel, she had devoted herself to journeying about in quest of a cure. She and her niece had visited most of the noted cities of Europe, had spent two winters in Northern Africa, and now were voyaging back to England after a short stay in Brazil.

With the exception of a storm encountered north of the line, the Bedouin met fine weather, and, after a good passage, steamed slowly into the Thames. I have only a clouded recollection of the scene when we went ashore, though perhaps the most vividly recalled incident is the impressive farewell of Burroughs and his inamorata, by force of circumstances more pantomime than dialogue. Mrs. Loring and her niece were bound for Paris. My way lay westward.

"So sorry to lose you, doctor,—so sorry," Mrs. Loring declared. "Actually, really actually, doctor, I believe you understand my trouble better than anybody else I ever met,—and oh, Dr. Morris, I have met so many! It makes me shudder, sometimes, to think of them all. But now we're going to Paris, dear Paris—Dorothy, don't let that cabman handle that valise so carelessly! The government shouldn't permit such men to have cabs. Yes, as I was saying, Paris is so delightful, and it would be so pleasant if you could be there with us. Dear, dear! he's dropped it just as if it were a stone! Dorothy, please do caution him. Now, doctor, we must say *au revoir*; not good-by, you know, for we shall meet again, really we shall, but *au revoir*. And I'm so grateful to you! I really can't tell you how grateful I am. You must send us your address, doctor, and we'll send you ours; and when we go back to America we shall see you again. Oh, I know we shall. Goodness gracious! he's got the bag with the medicine-bottles in it!"

Mrs. Loring dashed forward to prevent a catastrophe.

"I trust that your aunt is a good prophetess," I said to Miss Gray.

"When do you think you will return to the States?"

"Before very long, I hope; it may be within a year."

"Then where will you make your home?"

"I can hardly guess. Our plans, you know, are most uncertain."

"Dorothy, Dorothy!" Mrs. Loring called.

"I trust that you will have a delightful trip," said I. "Our voyage on the *Bedouin*—most pleasant—er—er—wish you—er—er—all manner—good fortune."

"And aunt and I wish you every success," she answered. "Remember, as she says, it is *au revoir*, and not good-by."

She drew her hand from mine,—I don't know just how long it had been in my clasp,—and I had the melancholy pleasure of assisting her to enter the cab. Then the vehicle rumbled away, leaving behind a sorrowing young man, who stood watching it grow smaller and smaller in the distance, and who, physician though he was, risked pneumonia by forgetting, for a most unreasonable time, to replace his hat upon his head.

IV.

I landed in New York on the third day of the new year, wofully lacking in projects for my future. The metropolis seemed to offer no promising field, and I soon gave up my idea of adding another unit to its hundreds of thousands. Then came thoughts of the West; but a chance meeting with an old classmate, who had ventured into that El Dorado of impoverished youth and had returned even poorer than he went forth, was taken as a warning against imitating his example. So, at last, accepting Hobson's choice, I reappeared in the city from which Captain Peck had lured me, and once more entered the crowded ranks of its physicians. It was a growing, bustling, active community, but my share in its general prosperity seemed destined to be sadly limited.

I secured cheap quarters in one of the poorer residence districts, thereby, perhaps, handicapping myself greatly, but at the same time reducing expenses to a point made advisable by a light purse. Still, in spite of the most rigid economy, the outgo constantly exceeded the income. From a small margin to the good I passed to a small balance on the wrong side of the ledger. Worst of all, this balance grew, not rapidly, for I thought twice before spending a penny, but with the steadiness resulting from an unseemly disproportion between earnings and expenses. None of the old patients returned to me,—though that was hardly a matter of regret,—and new ones were few and far between. Now and then an accident case,—what a keen eye I kept upon buildings in course of construction in the neighborhood! then perhaps a call to attend some stranger fallen in a fit on the pavement; then a sufferer from some chronic malady, even deeper in debt than I, and changing physicians simply because the charity of the first was worn out: such was the shadow of a practice which appeared never likely to round out into a reality. My garments of decent black became shiny with use, while my bell-pull lost its polish through rust. If I looked as hungry as I often felt, it was no wonder that the ailing passed me by. Little by little the few articles in my possession of which there was not absolute need disappeared. Some were sold outright; others were lodged with pawnbrokers.

This state of things continued for more than a year, my lot growing more miserable day by day. At long intervals letters came from Perez. My replies were mailed with the promptness of a man whose time hangs heavy on his hands. There was no attempt in my letters to conceal my troubles; there was a certain relief in setting forth an indictment of the world in general and my neighbors in particular. More than once I was sorely tempted to seek a loan from him, but pride stood in the way. I had not quite reached the point of utter defeat, but I was very close to it. Not a word had been heard of Mrs. Loring and her niece, who, for all I knew, might be in Europe, Asia, Africa, or America. Letters had come from Mrs. Peck, telling me that she was at her home in Maine, awaiting the return of her husband from another voyage round the Horn. Her health, she was happy to add, appeared to be re-established.

As has been set forth, the test of endurance went on for more than a twelvemonth. It was ended in a strange manner, without warning, and at a time when I was near to despair. The landlord had attempted again to collect a part of the money due him,—he could scarcely be said to have hounded me for it, inasmuch as he had suffered so undesirable a tenant to fall several months in arrears,—and once more he had been put off with excuses and apologies. He had not been harsh in his replies, but it was easy to understand that his patience was fairly exhausted. He had left me still in possession, but I feared that a few days more would see me turned into the street and almost as hopeless as a shipwrecked sailor on a barren island. In either case starvation would be quite among the possibilities.

After a frugal supper I tried to read, but with very slight success, my thoughts wandering repeatedly from the book to the approaching

crisis in my affairs. It must have been for hours that I sat brooding over my perplexities. At last, more discouraged than ever by the unvarying trend of the reflections, I started to my feet, and, crossing to the window, raised the curtain and peered out. It was later than I had supposed, for the lights had disappeared from the houses across the way and the pavements seemed to be deserted. Turning back to my desk, I filled a pipe. Tobacco was the sole luxury left to me, and the stock in my pouch was running low.

There came a knock at the door, a light tap thrice repeated. As I answered the summons, a man stepped into the room and with a quick motion closed the door behind him. He was of medium height, thin, sallow-faced, hook-nosed, with crisp black hair and moustache shot with gray.

"Dr. Alfred Morris?" he asked.

I bowed and motioned him to a chair. Disregarding the invitation, he drew a letter from his pocket.

"For you—this," said he.

The envelope bore no address. Breaking the seal, I drew out a sheet of paper on which was written, "Let the bearer command all good offices." In place of the name of the writer was a Greek cross with three dots beside it. A second glance at the words above the device satisfied any doubts as to the identity of the man whose hand had penned them.

"This is the best of introductions," said I. "Pray be seated. In what way can I assist you?"

"It is a matter of a confidential character," he answered, with a glance about the room.

"You may speak freely: there is no one to play the eavesdropper."

"That is well. I will endeavor to trespass upon but little of your time."

He spoke with a peculiar slowness, almost hesitancy (as if picking his words with great care), and with a marked accent, which at once betrayed that English was not his native tongue.

"You may command me," said I. "But, pardon me, your name is not given in this note."

"My name? Ah, you may call me Lamar."

He came closer, and fixed a pair of piercing eyes upon me.

"Dr. Morris," said he, "I will request you to suffer me to pass by my reasons for coming here."

"Your credentials are enough," said I. "Rest assured I shall question you on no point you prefer not to explain."

"And I may request also secrecy, in any event, regarding this meeting?"

"I give you my word. As I have said, you may command me."

He paused, as if to reach a decision in some matter of great moment. I studied him with increasing curiosity, my interest fired by the strange circumstances of his visit.

"I make you, then, a proposition," he said, at last. "I wish to obtain the right to your time and attendance."

I stared at him in blank amazement. What could he mean? Did

he propose to retain me as his private physician? Was he sufficiently wealthy to indulge in such luxuries? His dress told nothing on that score. He might have been a thrifty mechanic or a millionaire.

"It is my wish," he went on, "first to travel, but not far, then to seek retirement of the quietest. Once you told a friend, a friend,"—he repeated the word, as if to emphasize it,—“of a place near to the sea, solitary, remote. Is it not so?”

"Yes, I remember," said I, my thoughts flashing back to the conversation on the last night with Perez.

"My health is precarious," he continued. "I wish to be not disturbed, to be guarded from intrusion, as well as to receive medical attention when necessary."

"In other words," I suggested, "you wish me to accompany you to the spot you have mentioned, to remain with you, and to see to it that you have the privacy you desire."

"It is as you have said."

"You ask a speedy decision?"

"Immediate."

I looked at him doubtfully, as well I might after receiving such a proposal. He gauged my thoughts, no doubt, for he pressed me on the point where resistance would be weakest.

"You will be amply remunerated," said he. "May I ask the terms which will be agreeable, and which will suffice to repay your loss in leaving the city?"

The appearance of the room might have told him how little that loss would be. More to test him than with any well-defined idea as to the value of my services, I said,—

"Two thousand dollars a year, and expenses, with an allowance for closing up my affairs here."

"It is agreed. Let us bind the bargain." And with that he drew from his pocket a roll of bills and held them out to me.

"When shall the arrangement take effect?" I asked.

"Now; from this moment. Shall it be so?"

I hesitated, but only for an instant. The sight of the money overpowered my doubts,—it represented so much to one whose fortunes were so desperate.

"Yes," said I, "from this moment." And I took the roll of bills.

I had acted upon impulse, but it may be that long deliberation would have brought about the same result. I knew nothing of the man, except that he bore a token from my best friend. I was ignorant even of his name, for from the first I understood Lamar to be an *alias*. At his motives I could hardly guess, but it was most probable that he was a political exile. At all events, association with him could not change my condition for the worse. There would be at least the prospect of a decent livelihood; and very alluring that prospect was. In short, it was difficult to discover how I should be the loser. A moderately successful practitioner would have smiled at such an estimate as I had placed upon my services, but the experiences of the last year had not been conducive to over-confidence. So, now that I had put myself

under this stranger's orders, I lost no time in asking him what the first of them might be. He replied that he was anxious to leave the city at once.

"There is little to detain me," said I. "I dare say I can be at your disposal by ten o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Not so. We must depart to-night," he answered, decisively.

"What? To-night? There is no train at this hour."

"I comprehend. But I prefer a carriage beyond the environs. One can be obtained, can it not?"

"Yes."

"Then arrange for it at once. You may return for a time, if there is need."

Here was haste with a vengeance. Still, if he desired it, so should it be. It mattered little to me how the night was passed. He was paying for his right to command, and he should have the worth of his money.

"A conveyance shall be at the door in half an hour," said I. "Will you await it here?"

"No. But I will return in the time set," said he. "First pledge me again to maintain faith."

I gave the promise, and saw him step out into the night, without concerning myself greatly as to the probable outcome of our alliance. Then I went my way to rouse up the owner of a livery-stable near by and to bargain with him for a vehicle. Although he had never profited by my patronage, he knew me to be a physician, and therefore supposedly subject to late calls from distant patients. I had decided to drive to Merton, a town about twenty miles away, on the line of railway we would use in our journey. The man exacted a stiff price for the carriage, but there was no haggling over it, for I got as much pleasure as he from the exorbitant sum he demanded: there was certainly more of novelty for me in participating in such a transaction.

When, at the time appointed, Lamar returned to the office, he carried a small black satchel, which apparently contained all the effects he cared to take with him. The carriage was at the door, the driver grumbling to himself at the long ride which lay before him. Once in the vehicle, Lamar settled himself comfortably in his corner and lighted a cigar. The satchel was on the seat beside him. I observed that his hand never left it. Neither of us spoke often in the course of the drive. There were questions I burned to ask, but it was altogether likely that they would not be answered. As his employee, I felt compelled to respect his moods, and his present one was certainly that of reticence. Although the road was good, and the motion of the vehicle easy, I felt no drowsiness: my strange companion supplied me with abundant food for reflection. Our Jehu took his time, and the horses were not ambitious, but before daylight our destination had been reached. A sleepy attendant led us to our rooms in the Merton Hotel, and a little later I was slumbering as peacefully as if I had been stowed away in my dingy quarters in the city, with never a prospect of an adventure more unusual than an encounter with a dunning creditor.

V.

Lamar's knock awakened me, and I arose refreshed and ready to carry out the scheme outlined the night before. A clock on the mantel showed that nearly half the day had slipped away. Dressing quickly, I passed into my companion's sitting-room, where a substantial breakfast was spread on the centre-table. It had been arranged that we should shun the hotel dining-room, and a statement that Lamar was travelling under my professional care could be relied upon to quiet any curiosity developed by our exclusiveness.

Lamar was seated at the table, with a half-finished cup of coffee before him. The light from the window fell full upon him, and for an instant I repented the bargain between us; for his face was one of the most repulsive it had ever been my lot to behold. The sallowness I had noticed was more pronounced, and there were lines which had escaped the scrutiny by lamplight. The chin was long and pointed, the cheeks were thin, and the forehead, though high enough to indicate no lack of brain-power, was narrow and wrinkled. There were hollows at the temples such as one often sees in sufferers from wasting diseases; with the dark circles under his eyes, they gave him the look of a man whose health was irretrievably shattered, though, as it proved, his physical condition was no matter of immediate concern. As has been said, his nose was large and curved, and his hair and moustache were streaked with gray. His teeth, which he seldom showed, were large, discolored, and irregular. His eyes, above which the brows met in a bushy hedge, were small and deeply sunk in his head. There was hardly one of the man's features which was pleasing, and combined they made up a face almost grotesque in its uncomeliness; yet in studying the expression of his countenance one forgot his ugliness. It is the business of the physician sometimes to consider more than mere bodily ailments, to heed the signs and tokens of the forces of the animating spirit, to seek out the passions which have held sway and dominated the existence of the patient. Deceived somewhat at first by his appearance of decrepitude, I tried to solve the problem Lamar presented from a professional stand-point. There was power in his face; power, will, determination; much self-control, and more selfishness. Plainly, thought I, a man of bitter hates and few affections, unscrupulous and resourceful, now a fugitive, and bearing in his eye the look of dread of his pursuers.

What had brought him to such straits? Over and over again I asked myself the question. That political intrigues had made him an outlaw seemed to be the most natural explanation, but it failed to meet all the requirements of the case. A political offender, once in the United States, would be free to go about openly, yet here he was in hiding and anxious to reach a still more remote refuge. His manner was that of one accustomed to exercise authority. Why should he have intrusted his fate to a stranger, young and poor? Surely he might have commanded a far more powerful ally. It was as if in his game with fate he had chosen to risk his all on the slenderest of chances and at the greatest odds.

He gave me time enough for these reflections; for after the first

salutations he relapsed into silence. Perhaps he guessed what the trend of my thoughts would be, and was willing to allow me an opportunity to study him. Not until my meal was finished did he speak. He had lighted a cigar, and was watching the rings of smoke, which he blew very skilfully.

"So far all has gone well," said he. "Yet I would not delay: this I think you do comprehend. It is, however, my preference to travel by night. But first let me ask, you are still content with the agreement?"

"Perfectly," said I. It was not the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, but it served well enough.

"Very good. Then to consideration of an immediate matter. You will pardon me my slowness of speech in English——"

"But you speak it well," I broke in.

"I lived in England several years," he answered, but no sooner was the explanation made than he appeared to regret it; for he added, "But to our subject. Permit me to lay before you a plan."

"Pray proceed," said I, somewhat puzzled as to what was to come.

"This it is: that you, having this afternoon to do with as you may, return to the city and there conclude such affairs as are pressing. It is most probable that another opportunity so excellent may not present itself."

His meaning was sufficiently patent: once we should have reached our destination he would prefer to have me without an excuse for revisiting my old haunts. Nothing, though, would suit me better than to fall in with his desire. So I said,—

"If you will allow me until nine o'clock this evening, I promise to be free in every way to accompany you wherever you choose to go. My business can be closed in short order. You may rest satisfied that I shall say nothing of the change of my plans. In fact, I don't expect to excite any lively curiosity: it will be merely a case of another man dropping out of sight: the city is too accustomed to such disappearances to worry about another added to the list. Believe me, I don't regret our arrangement."

Regret it, indeed! The salary offered was ten times as large as my income for the last year. It would mean at least plenty to eat and plenty to wear, a comfortable home, and freedom from the cares which had made life a burden. The wolf of poverty that had haunted my door would be driven on to howl about the dwelling of the next poor devil. At an earlier stage of my career I might have hesitated, have paused before consenting to bury myself in the country; but it is a rarely vigorous ambition that thrives on grinding monotony and grows strong through years of semi-starvation: mine was not made of such sturdy stuff. Had Lamar sprouted horns and displayed a cloven hoof, I might have experienced qualms, but scarcely well-defined regrets.

Three hours later I was again in the city, and the few ties which had bound me to it were severed. The landlord took my departure philosophically; payment of the arrears of rent seemed to reconcile him to losing the tenant. A near-by practitioner gladly agreed to give room to my books until they should be sent for, and a junkman drove an easy

bargain for my furniture. A valise was capacious enough to receive the few effects I cared to take away, and even its contents might have been parted with without great sorrow. There were no patients to worry about, and few questions to answer. To such as were put I replied that I had secured an appointment in the country; and even my professional brother did not think it worth while to push the inquiry further. In short, my neighbors manifested no more curiosity about me than about the vanished builder of a last year's bird's-nest still swinging on a bough of the half-dead tree at the corner.

It would have been easy to return to Merton long before the appointed time, but I tarried in town to enjoy a luxury which had charmed my fancy on many a day when the cravings of hunger possessed me. There was a restaurant, famous far and near, a gastronomic Mecca to which many pilgrims journeyed joyously, under whose roof I was determined to dine. Often had I surveyed its glories from the pavement without, prowling about the place in fascination at the picture of good cheer visible through its windows. Now I was privileged to enter, strong in the consciousness that a roll of bills still of goodly size in spite of the payments made from it nestled in my pocket. Let it be confessed, however, that as I stepped through the door-way my hand was clutched about the money, as if in fear that it might vanish. Not until I had dined and the account had been liquidated did the dread of an awakening from so pleasant a dream disappear. The remembrance of that solitary feast will be always with me; for it brought the first convincing proof that the old period of stress was at an end.

A suburban train bore me to Merton early in the evening. I went at once to my employer's room. Before leaving the city I had secured time-tables of the road on which we were to make our journey, and had found that a through express stopped at the town at ten o'clock. Lamar was well pleased with this bit of information. He had not quitted his quarters in my absence, he said, and none of the hotel servants, except the somnolent porter who admitted us, had had a glimpse of his face, for he had kept out of sight when food and drink were brought to his room. A little before ten o'clock I settled our reckoning, and we left the hotel by a side door, reaching the station just as the train rolled up to the platform. My companion chose a coach in which there were few passengers, and, picking out a dark corner, buried his face in his upturned coat-collar and pretended to sleep. One of his hands was clasped about the strap of his little valise, and not once in the course of the journey did he loosen his grip upon it.

There was a weary ride of several hours, and then an equally weary wait at a junction at which we were to take a train over a branch line, but long before the lazy folk—if there were any sluggards in that workaday region—were stirring, our travel by rail had been completed. We left the cars at Bassettville, the station nearest Rodneytown, which was separated from the railway by a ten-mile stretch of country. As it happened, Sam Carpenter, the owner of a livery stable near by, who usually supplied conveyances to persons desiring to reach the village, was an acquaintance of my boyhood days. With him I was soon in friendly discourse.

"I've got a patient with me, Sam," said I, "and he wants to breathe pure sea-breezes. I'm taking him down to the old place. He needs good air and quiet."

"Wall, he won't git much else, I guess," said the man, with all the contempt of the railroad town for a place less blest. "Want a steady nag, don't ye? Take a boy along, or drive yerself?"

"Never mind about the boy; I know the way," I answered. "I'll see that the team gets back to you this afternoon."

A little later I drove up to the station where Lamar had been awaiting me. He climbed into the buggy with an agility which was surprising, considering his appearance of illness, and settled down beside me with the valise still in his hands. I offered to stow it away with my sole piece of luggage back of the seat, but he shook his head.

"It is my preference to keep it," said he. "It is not a burden."

The morning was fresh and clear, and as we drove along the charm of it gained possession of my senses. I forgot the fatigue of the night in a stuffy car and the fact that we had not breakfasted. About us were gently rolling hills, topped here and there by dark woods, below which stretched broad meadows and cultivated fields; a clear brook rippled near the road, which followed the tortuous course of its little valley; and overhead was a sky without a fleck of cloud, in the heart of the spring morning the most glorious of canopies.

"A beautiful country," said I, half in soliloquy and half addressing my companion.

"And more,—a safe country, I think," said he. "We are not followed,—at least so far. No one else left the train when we did."

"Oh," said I, thus dragged back from sentiment to reality, "we ought to be safe enough. But, speaking of pursuit, was danger of it imminent?"

"Perhaps," he answered, dryly.

We rode on in silence, the good old horse between the shafts proving his master's warranty of a lack of coltishness, yet contriving to get over the ground with satisfactory despatch. We parted company with the brook, crossed a little ridge, and turned down another narrow valley, traversed it, and crossed a stretch of woodland where the branches of the trees locked above the highway, climbed a hill, and in a moment were looking upon a scene in which there was no suggestion of those through which we had just passed. The road a little beyond us swerved sharply to the left, and, following the line of the ridge, led to the clustered houses of the village a mile away. Right before us was the long, gentle slope of the hill, terminating in the low plain I knew so well, fringed with marsh and veined with narrow tidal streams; and still farther on was the bay, glittering in the sun like a vast sheet of bejewelled azure. Here and there along its margin rose knolls on which grew clumps of stunted trees. Above one of them, a little nearer us than the rest, could be seen the chimney of the old house, as lonely a habitation as man could desire.

"There," said I to my companion, pointing to the spot, "there is your ideal hermitage."

VI.

What would have been the result upon my fortunes had the asylum-seeker failed to be satisfied with the retreat selected is a question over which I have since wasted much time. On the whole, it is probable that I should have seen little more of him, the chances being that in a day or two he would have disappeared, leaving, perhaps, a sum of money sufficient in his eyes to compensate me for services rendered to that date. It is good evidence of the recklessness which then possessed me that, though a contingency of this sort had been in my mind from the first, the thought of it had had no deterring influence. As it was, however, he seemed to be content with the choice made for him and ready to carry out our contract.

The task of settling him in his new abode proved to be unexpectedly easy. The owner of the old house was glad to dispose of it for a song, throwing in a patch of marsh-land along with the little hill on which the building stood. Though it was in need of repairs, and though wind and weather had left many a mark upon it, it was still a stout structure, with stanch beams and firm foundations, capable, apparently, of withstanding the gales of a score of winters. It was built on the summit of the hummock, which rose about forty feet above the sea-level, a rocky spur pushed up into the light and air from some stratum buried under the low lands of the coast. Upon the rocks was a scanty covering of soil, barely sufficient to give support to the fringe of dwarfed evergreens which surrounded the dwelling. Half-way down the slope on the west or landward side was a spring, about which was a patch of turf, the only bit of green on the premises, for the soil under the trees was dull brown in hue, and the seaward terraces were too steep and stony to give root to even the hardiest of grasses. To the east, directly between the knoll and the beach, was a marsh, which also curved about the rocks to border their southern side. On the north a tidal stream flowed so close to the base of the slope that one could step from a boat to the lowest of the rocky ledges. To the west the land was level, but not marshy, and the line of a long-abandoned wagon-track could be traced straight across to the hill from which Lamar had gained his first view of his refuge. Rodneytown was considerably more than a mile distant, but about half-way between the village and the knoll were three or four farm-houses. Their occupants would be Lamar's nearest neighbors, at least on the land side. To the south, perched on another rocky point about a quarter of a mile away, was the hut of a family of fishermen, who were not likely to be intrusive.

As has been said, the business of taking possession was a simple matter, and the night after our arrival we passed in the house by the bay. Lamar showed amazing energy in making the place habitable, and within a week wonders were accomplished. A wagon-load of furniture and fittings was secured from the village; I turned glazier to replace the broken window-panes, whose absence had served at least to save the place from the reproach of mustiness; and my employer developed no mean ability as a carpenter. To be sure, it was a mere box of a house, making our labor so much the lighter, but I felt a

good deal of pride in the results. On the ground-floor was a living-room, with a kitchen behind it, and a small room opening from the kitchen. Above were two rooms of fair size, both of which, Lamar told me, he should require for his own use. It had been agreed, soon after our arrival, that I should find quarters in one of the farm-houses between the refuge and the village,—an arrangement entirely to my liking, for the prospect of dwelling under the same roof with Lamar was not alluring. He was as unsympathetic as an iceberg, and hardly more loquacious, and the mystery he maintained was not of the fascinating sort. In the week we passed together I came to dislike him exceedingly. Sometimes, when a day's labors were ended, he would sit for hours puffing away at his cigar, watching the wreaths of smoke, but speaking not a word and hardly honoring me with a glance. What his reflections might be was beyond my power to conjecture; yet I managed, with considerable satisfaction, to convince myself that he had committed some crime of particular atrocity, and that he was no common political exile. Never, however, did he give me cause to suppose him to be a sufferer from remorse. Whatever his reasons for flight might have been, he seemed now to regard himself as respited from pursuit, and his look lost something of its restlessness, though it was evident that he did not feel that his peril was ended. He had strengthened the doors of the house and fitted them with heavy bolts, while stout bars were ready to be stretched across the lower windows at a moment's notice.

In these early days of our stay at Rodneytown my acquaintance with the townspeople stood us in good stead. Of course our coming and the purchase of the old house set the tongues of the village gossips wagging, but the chatter was not very ill-natured, and the explanation that I, an old Rodneytown boy, had brought an invalid to the shore for the benefit of the sea-air was accepted with even less demur than I had looked for, for the villagers were proud of the healthfulness of the place. The additional statement that the sick man required complete quiet, and for the present was unable to receive visitors, was successful in its object. Lamar was not molested by inquisitive callers, and after a little the people whom I met ceased to question me about him, save at rare intervals. A barn-burning about that time did us a great service in giving the townsmen a more vitally interesting topic than a sick stranger forced by his malady to lead a solitary existence.

Among the most delicate tasks falling to my lot was the securing of a servant for the invalid, but, here again fortune being kind, an old negress was installed as nominal nurse and actual housekeeper. She had been born a slave, according to village talk, but had secured her freedom and migrated North. She was an excellent cook, but so surly and crabbed was her disposition—moreover, she was very deaf—that at last nobody would employ her. A recital of her disabilities sent me post-haste after her; for, if she was as unsociable as she was represented to be, she was the woman in a thousand for us. When she took charge of the kitchen we were relieved on one point at least: there would be no gossiping at that end of the house.

Meanwhile, I had contracted for food and lodging at one of the farm-houses, and had put out my shingle in due form,—much to the satisfaction of my hostess, who confessed that it pleased her to have evidences given that there was “a grown man ’bout the place.” She was Mrs. Elvira Weston, a widow, and the mother of two boys, neither of whom was yet old enough to relieve her of the cares of the farm. She was a cheery soul, who had endured many misfortunes without losing courage, and I was glad to secure quarters under her roof. She allotted to me a wing of the house, which, having an entrance of its own, would serve admirably as an office. I soon had my den fitted up in a way to excite considerable local admiration. A few books, a couple of anatomical charts, and some vials of drugs were disposed to the best advantage to impress patients with the mysteries of the healing art.

In its beginning my practice in Rodneytown was much like an early spring in New England,—more promise than realization. A daily visit to Lamar was the basing-point of my routine. As a rule, it was very brief, though occasionally he let me understand that my post was no sinecure. Now and then he sent me on trips to Trent, a thriving hive of manufactories about thirty miles from the village. On the first of these journeys one of my duties was to mail a letter to a New York banking house; on the next I was informed that a large sum was on deposit to my credit with the principal bank of the place. Thus, while my patron kept some control over the purse-strings, I was the acting paymaster. From first to last there could be no charge of niggardliness made against him; he looked over my accounts now and then, but never questioned their accuracy.

As he finished his superficial auditing on one of these occasions, he looked up, and asked, rather abruptly,—

“The old fisherman who lives yonder—what do you know of him?”

“Not much,” said I, “except that his name is Johnson, that he has been in the navy, and that he has the best of reputations for honesty.”

“No more?”

“Well, he and his two brothers who live with him are an unsociable lot, who keep much to themselves. There’s no woman with them: they’re their own housekeepers.”

“I may buy of their fish. Bid the eldest to come here to-night. You need not be present,” said he. With his usual ceremonious bow at parting, he turned on his heel and stalked up-stairs to his sanctum.

The order was surprising, in view of his desire to avoid his neighbors; but, though it puzzled me, I sought out Johnson and delivered the message. That night in my cosy office I tried in vain to discover a reason for the interview then going on in the house on the knoll. The fish explanation was fishy indeed, old Martha, the cook, being quite able, in spite of her deafness, to bargain for any supplies for her department. It was improbable that Lamar had any notion of setting Johnson to spy upon my doings, for he had used me as a means of communicating with the man, a course he would not have adopted had he entertained any suspicions of my faithfulness. It might be that he desired to arrange for the use of a sloop owned by the brothers, with

an eye to the possibility of opening a way of retreat by sea in case his present stronghold became untenable. Yes, that seemed to be the most reasonable explanation, although, so far as I knew, Lamar was not in the slightest danger of discovery by his enemies. Such a precaution at that time appeared to be about as necessary as a shipment of antidotes for frost-bite to the Hottentots.

Sleeping over the matter gave me no fresh light upon it, nor was I the wiser for my pains for many a day thereafter; but at last chance, the much-explaining, furnished the clue.

I had tarried at the house on the knoll unusually late that afternoon, and the sun was setting as I began my walk homeward. It had been a clear, pleasant day, with a good deal of warmth in the sunshine, although autumn was now far advanced; but as evening came on the air grew chilly and the brisk off-shore breeze took on a touch of the approaching winter. With turned-up coat-collar and hands buried in my pockets, I stepped out briskly on the tramp homeward, rather reconciled at the moment to the slenderness of a practice which guaranteed me an undisturbed evening. With book and pipe, an easy-chair, and a bright fire, several hours could be passed very delightfully, with the stiff breeze whistling through the tree-tops and signalling warnings to good folk within-doors to keep snugly under cover. Just at this point in my reflections there came a fierce gust which almost sent me staggering back. My hat, torn from my head, went seaward, spinning like a top in what might have been a baby whirlwind. I ran after it at my best gait, sometimes losing ground and sometimes gaining, only to see the gust with impish perversity sweep it from my very grasp. Then my toe caught in something, and down I went in a heap. As I regained my feet, the hat, with a flight as clumsy as that of a hen clearing a barn-yard fence, flopped across a salt-water creek and dropped upon the opposite bank. The tide was at the ebb, and the stream was neither broad nor deep. Gathering such momentum as I could, I ran to the edge and gave a vigorous leap. My feet struck the farther bank, but slipped in the soft mud, and once more I measured my length, sprawling this time, however, half in the water and half on shore. In the worst of tempers I scrambled out of the slime, picked up the runaway hat, and then almost dropped it again in surprise; for right before me was a wire, strung as neatly as any telegraph line, and supported by posts about a foot in height. The chase had carried me into the marsh to the south of Lamar's house, toward which the wire extended in one direction. Where was the other end of it? That query could have but one answer,—Johnson's cottage, the only habitation in that quarter.

In the course of the next day's visit to Lamar I told him of my accidental discovery.

"It is a trifle, a small contrivance to summon Johnson," said he, quietly. "He is useful in many ways; he may be more useful still in others. He is a stout fellow and a brave."

"Then you fear——?"

"You have the saying," he answered, with a shrug of the shoulders, "'In time of peace prepare for war.'"

VII.

Had the master of the house on the knoll been other than he was, this latest precaution might have served to excite a suspicion that his mind was beginning to give way under the depressing influences of his manner of existence. Afterward, it is true, suspicions of the sort came to me, though they were never long-lived, but at that time, while wonder was aroused, the feeling carried with it no suggestion that he was not actuated by some sufficient reason for the step he had taken. So far as I knew, his safety was not threatened; but I had to confess myself in ignorance of the character of the peril he dreaded, and to note his arrangements, without appreciating the need of them, much as a raw recruit might watch the many and seemingly excessive precautions of a veteran in charge of a magazine.

About a fortnight after the adventure in the marsh Lamar surprised me with an invitation to dine. He said very little while the meal was in progress, but when Martha had cleared the table and shuffled off to her own domain he began to talk with unwonted freedom. He asked questions about the village, concerning which his curiosity was certainly new-born, and then about the progress I had made in building up a practice.

"Well," said I, rather sheepishly, "it's slow work. People hereabouts are conservative. Most of them have survived old Dr. Banks's attentions for a good many years, and they're cautious about changing. Besides, most of them knew me as a youngster, and it takes time to live down the fact that I was a boy."

"You maintain the professional air?" said he, inquiringly.

"Yes, though they give me little cause to smell of drugs. Strange and powerful odors would impress them, I suspect; at least, some of the older brethren seem to find such an aroma worth carrying about with them."

"You should possess a conveyance of your own."

"So far one has been unnecessary. In case of need, Mrs. Weston lends me a horse and buggy."

"That will not suffice. Procure a suitable vehicle and a horse,—one of speed. The cost shall be mine."

"Very well," I answered.

He rose and bowed in the fashion in which he terminated an interview, adding, however, before he left the room, "Procure them at once."

I understood that in this order he had an eye as much to his own benefit as to mine, but it pleased me nevertheless. There was nothing in the way of horseflesh in the neighborhood which would meet the requirement of great speed, and I resolved to drive to Bassettville the next day to seek Sam Carpenter's assistance, his knowledge of the trotting stock of the region being encyclopædic in its scope. To the shrewdness of a horse-trader born and bred he joined a reasonable amount of honesty, and, as there would be no haggling over his commission, he could be relied upon as a trustworthy adviser. When I drew rein the following morning before his stable he came out to meet

me, with a twinkle of professional amusement in his eye as he glanced at Mrs. Weston's steady old mare and ramshackle buckboard.

"Sam," said I, getting down to business at once, "I want to buy a good horse."

"Like enough ye dew," he answered, dryly. "Many dewes; some gits 'em."

"I want your help. What's more, I'll pay for it."

"Now yer talkin' sense," said he, warming up a little. "Buyin' a hoss's like gittin' a wife; if yer don't know yer bizness, good looks'll fool ye, nine times out o' ten. But what's yer pick, go or show?"

"Go," said I. "A horse that will stand without tying, that's easy to drive, that has no bad tricks, that will jog along till he's called upon, and then will give anything in the country his dust,—that's the horse I'm after."

"D'jer ever try to name a baby so's to suit seven maiden aunts?" he queried, with what seemed to be unnecessary irrelevance.

"No."

"Wall, I reckon ye've got the same kind of a job on hand."

"Oh, come," said I, "you're my reliance in this. Scratch your head, and dig out what I'm after. It will be worth your while."

He reflected for a moment.

"Wall," said he, "there's nothin' to suit ye round here; but if ye'll come along to Trent, I'll show ye just the article yer after."

The proposal pleased me; for I had several errands to attend to in that city, and a ride of less than an hour by rail would carry us there.

"Come on, then," said Carpenter, when I had agreed to his plan; "let's get down ter the deepo. Train's due in ten minits."

During the trip he told me something of the various happenings in Bassettville, and, in turn, sought news of Rodneytown in general, and of my patient in particular. He had heard, he said, a story that the invalid was a rich brewer from the South who had been sent to a less enervating climate. I prayed that the yarn might receive general circulation and credence, though how it had been started was one of the mysteries of countryside gossip.

"He's from Charleston, South Car'liny, some folks allow," said Carpenter, suggestively.

"From that direction, certainly," I answered.

"He keeps mighty close."

"He has to. Quiet, absolute quiet, is the best medicine he can have," I hastened to explain.

"Tain't much fun fer a man ter live like a clam," Carpenter observed. "Still, it's livin', and that beats dyin' every time. It's like fishin' fer bass and catchin' bull-heads."

When we left the train at the Trent station Sam led the way to the stable where we hoped to make a purchase. The horse, a big dark bay, long-legged and with a wisp of a tail, was brought out of his stall and trotted up and down the street for inspection. He was not a pretty horse in any way, but Carpenter gave me a nudge which might be taken to indicate that the animal met his approval. He drew me

aside, after having made a long and thorough examination of the horse.

"Eight years old, sound as a dollar; wind and legs all right," said he, in a whisper. "I've seen him before. He's good for a mile under 2.40. Quiet as a lamb, no fool notions; sensible as a Christian about trains,—knows the injine can't hurt him if he keeps off the track."

"What's the price?"

"Five hundred—asked," said he, with a strong emphasis on the last word.

I whistled softly.

"Oh, that's the askin' price," he explained. "It's like a woman's chignon: it'll come off."

"I'm in your hands," said I. "Understand, I want your guarantee in this business, and you'll be paid for it. Besides the horse, I need harness and a buggy."

"Wall," said he, after a moment's calculation, "I'll be fair with ye. Will ye give me what I can clear under five hundred dollars fer the hull outfit, hoss, light-runnin' buggy, and a good harness?"

"It's a bargain. I'll go to the bank, draw the money, and bring it to you here. Will you drive the rig to Bassettville, so that I can get it there to-night when I come down by train?"

"By the time yer back from the bank I'll have made the dicker and be ready to start," said he. And he was as good as his word. Before noon the payment had been made and my new horse was trotting steadily along the road leading from Trent. Carpenter's praise of the animal had been enough to end my doubts as to his speed, but I could not but wish that the steed were more pleasing to look upon.

Though I wasted a good deal of time over a mid-day dinner and the various commissions I had to execute, I found upon reaching the railway station that there was nearly an hour of waiting ahead of me before the accommodation train should begin its journey down the road. The station, however, was not a bad place in which to kill time, for two lines met there, and the rapid ebb and flow of the human tide continued from morning to night. I rubbed elbows with stolid farmers, brisk townspeople, and nervous women, chatted for a moment with an acquaintance, and then stepped out upon the platform in search of some sheltered nook where a cigar might be enjoyed in peace. A long train from the West monopolized one of the tracks. It appeared to be well filled with passengers, and I strolled the length of it, surveying with some amusement the faces flattened against the windows of the cars, faces old, middle-aged, and young, but all alike in their expression of vague curiosity, as their owners watched the stream of travellers passing from the waiting-rooms. I had nearly reached the end of the last car, and had bent down to strike a match in the lee of it, when I heard my name called.

"Oh, Dr. Morris, Dr. Morris, dear doctor, that's you, isn't it? Do come here, quick, quick! The train will be starting in a second, and I must see you! Oh, doctor, doctor, quick, quick!"

I recognized the voice. It was that of Mrs. Loring, with all the old hurrying rush of words I remembered so well. Looking up, I saw

the itinerant sufferer leaning far out of the car window, with one arm waving wildly, as if to assist in attracting my attention. Pulling off my hat, I sprang toward her.

"Oh, this is fortunate, fortunate, doctor,—you can't know how fortunate!" she cried. "I've been anxious, so anxious, to see you. How is my health? Oh, doctor, it's terrible, terrible, worse than ever, doctor; worse, much worse, very much worse."

"And Miss Gray, is she still with you?" I asked, my eyes roaming over the windows and seeking her niece's face at one of them.

"Yes, yes, dear girl, dear girl, she never leaves me. How could she, and have a heart? Mine, doctor, has been up to one hundred and twenty a minute."

"Indeed," said I, throwing due professional gravity into the word. "I trust Miss Gray is well?"

"Yes, yes, as well as ever. And a temperature of one hundred and two, repeatedly, doctor, repeatedly."

"What, Miss Gray's tem——?" cried I, with no fictitious concern.

"No, no, mine. Dear me, doctor, didn't I tell you it was mine? Those springs in Kentucky,—we've just come from them,—they did me no good, I'm sure. And I was so hopeful, doctor, so hopeful; the water had so many strange things in it, I was sure some of them must help me."

"Your case is a marvellous one, Mrs. Loring," said I. "Will you kindly present my regards to your niece, and——"

She stopped me with a quick gesture.

"Please put your address here," said she, thrusting a note-book toward me. "Hurry, please hurry,—the train is beginning to move. I have an idea that—— Oh, thanks; yes, yes, I see, 'Rodneytown.' So good of you, yes, so good. Good-by, doctor, good-by."

The train was fairly under headway now, and I stood bowing low, but not to the vanishing invalid. At the next window to hers I had had a glimpse of another face, one that dreams had kept fresh in my memory and that had figured in the little of romance that had crept into my existence.

VIII.

Winter, as a rule, displays few of his milder moods on that coast, and I had dreaded the effect of the season's rigors upon Lamar, who certainly had had no experience of the protracted cold of the latitude. Luckily, the house on the knoll had been built to withstand storms, and I saw to it that an abundant supply of fuel was laid in, so that, on the whole, in spite of its exposed position, the dwelling was fairly comfortable even in the worst weather. Its owner made no complaints. He spent much of his time in one of the upper rooms, which he had fitted up as a sort of laboratory. His interest appeared to be divided between chemistry and electricity, though whether his experiments in either had any object save his own amusement I never learned. Two or three cases of books had been shipped from Trent to my address, but for his use, and, when he cared to read, a miscellaneous collection

of worthies could be drawn upon. There were a few Portuguese books and a few Spanish, a good many in Latin, and a still larger number in French and in English. Burton's *Anatomy*, Cicero's *Letters*, and Voltaire's works seemed to be his favorites: I say "seemed," for he never took the trouble to speak of any of the authors he read.

He was still as cadaverous as ever, though his general physical condition was as good as could be hoped for by any man who led so sedentary a life. December dragged through its tempestuous length, and January followed with an even more trying stretch of gales and extreme cold. These conditions he withstood so well that I had hopes that the winter would pass without illness at the house on the knoll; but one day early in February I found him suffering from a severe cold and exhibiting symptoms which were most unfavorable. It was my first opportunity to earn the salary of his medical adviser, and fortune was kind. Although he developed a good deal of fever, and at the worst it was touch-and-go with pneumonia, a week saw him practically out of danger, though still quite willing to keep to his bed, and a good deal safer there than he would have been prowling about the house. He expressed no opinion of his treatment, no thanks to his doctor, no impatience to be about again. I was his physician, hired by the year, and so long as he was ill my orders were to be obeyed unquestioningly; there was no need of gratitude either way. It was all very logical, no doubt, but it increased my dislike for him. There would have been more real satisfaction in persuading a drooping sapling to keep alive.

After his recovery we slipped back into the old routine. He gave orders occasionally, and I obeyed them, without question and without any great heed for the reasons for them. In fact, speculating upon this man's history or his plans was such profitless business that, for the time, I gave it up in disgust. He was a person who was to be visited daily, who paid liberally for the attention, and who thus enabled me to pass my many leisure hours in careless, easy-going comfort. The people I met were no longer inquisitive about the hermit; the theory of the brewer from Charleston appeared to have spread widely and to have been accepted, finding believers far more easily than would have been the case with any statement of the facts concerning him, so far as they had fallen within my knowledge.

At last winter drew to a close, and spring came on, advancing coyly, as is the custom of maidens before whom the world is ready to bow in eager homage. Then the last of the snow-banks disappeared from the recesses of the hills, the slopes grew green, and the rank vegetation of the marsh flourished in all the vigor of its strong new life. Once more there were birds in the trees and flowers in the fields, and once more from the sea swept invigorating breezes.

To all about me spring brought renewed activities. There was a fine bustle on the farms, and even the sleepy village seemed to be awakened. For the first time my ease became onerous; I fell to inventing tasks to convince myself that one could be busy if he would. My horse, whose existence during the winter had been all that equine sloth could desire, was now in steady service, for the roads were excel-

lent, being sufficiently sandy soon to rid themselves of undesirable moisture, and I explored the highways and byways for miles around. Near the village I let my steed choose his own gait, but when we found a level bit of road where there were likely to be no spectators the trotter had an opportunity to prove his speed. He was all that Carpenter had said for him; devoid of nerves, yet, when pushed, by long odds the fastest animal in the region. His appearance certainly was against him. Arching the neck he left to the younger and less philosophical of his kind; his head was carried as low as that of the oldest and most decrepit plough-horse in the town. He was free from the vice of stumbling, yet often seemed to threaten to lose his footing on the slightest provocation. A high knee-action was foreign to his notions, and his ordinary trot was a mere shuffle. Yet he covered ground surprisingly, even when apparently only lounging along. His only serious fault, from a practical point of view, was a hard mouth, which sometimes made it no easy task to pull him in after one of our spurts.

We were jogging along toward the village one day, when I heard a sharp patter of hoofs behind me, and soon Dr. Banks's clever little mare drew up alongside the dark bay.

"Good-morning, Morris," her owner called out, in his cheery voice, which had done as much for his patients as half his prescriptions.

"Fine day, doctor," I shouted back to him.

"Very professional-looking nag you've got there," he continued. "Will stand without hitching, I'll be bound."

"He answers my purpose well enough," I responded, rather stiffly, for after a while jokes about one's horse, no matter how well intentioned, lose the charm of novelty.

"Pity he hasn't more speed," said the other, and, with a twitch of the reins, he shot his mare a couple of lengths ahead. It was probably his scheme to trot a hundred yards or so and then pull up to watch in triumph my tardy approach. When he looked over his shoulder, however, the bay's head was close to his wheel. Much surprised, and no less disappointed, he brought his animal down to a walk, a proceeding which I promptly imitated.

"I've been wanting to have a talk with you, Morris," he said. "It has struck me that we might co-operate a little to our mutual advantage."

"Indeed?" said I, wondering what might be in the old gentleman's mind.

"The fact is, I'm getting ancient," he went on.

"Not a bit of it," said I. "You're in your prime, fair, plump, and forty."

"Deny the first, admit the second, and make the third half as much again," said he. "I'm not broken down,—and I don't want to be before my time. That's just the point. This last winter gave me a warning. Besides, I've enough to live on, and I'd like to have a little chance for play after forty years of work. I want to travel a bit, to see something of this big country of ours. I'm like a mole that knows his particular garden by heart, but has hardly a notion of what may be on the other side of the fence. The long and short of it

is, I'd like to shift my heavy work to younger shoulders, which will bear it more easily, and, I dare say, better."

"Not better," said I.

"The fact is, as you've probably discovered, this town is hardly big enough to support two doctors comfortably. It has seemed to me that we might make some arrangement which would be advantageous to both of us. There's a young chap in Trent who is trying to dicker with me, but I've put him off, for you're first on the ground, and I don't believe in making two people sleep in a bed that's large enough for only one. By the way, though, am I right in supposing that you've decided to remain here permanently? That would make a difference, of course."

"I can't say that I have any settled plans," said I, "but there's no expectation of moving immediately."

"Well, think it over. There's no hurry about it," he answered; and, chirruping to his mare, away he rattled toward the village.

I followed slowly in his wake, letting the bay choose his own gait. Dr. Banks's proposition had taken me by surprise; moreover, it had served to rouse me to a realization of the completeness with which my future was subject to the caprices of fate. For the present, to be sure, there was no cause for anxiety; but a week might change the situation completely. Suppose Lamar should choose to depart; there was no certainty that he would not leave me behind. Suppose he should die; it was hardly probable that I should profit by any bequest. Suppose his enemies should discover his retreat and descend upon him; the result, so far as I was concerned, would be the same. This last danger seemed to be the least imminent of the three, but it was as well to reckon it in. I had been in his pay for the better part of a year, but, in reality, was my position improved? I had lived in comfort, free from the cares which had burdened me in the city, I had accumulated a few hundred dollars, and physically I had been a gainer by the removal to the country. That was one side of the ledger. On the other could be read loss of the little progress I had made in my profession, absence of settled purposes of any sort, and a growth of that often disastrous docility which follows unquestioning subjection to another's strong will. Things could not go on as they were indefinitely. Sooner or later the end must come. And then? Was I prepared to devote myself to the narrow field of a country practitioner, useful and honorable as it was? Banks had done me a great service; he had roused me in most timely fashion; but the awakening had been far from pleasant.

From habit my horse came to a stand-still in front of the village post-office, and equally from habit I entered the place and asked for my mail. A letter, a medical journal, and a newspaper were handed out, and, mechanically thrusting them into my pocket, I walked to the buggy, climbed in, and turned my nag's head homeward. Still possessed by doubts and speculations, I rode to the farm-house, and, reaching it, locked myself in my office, there to endeavor to arrive at some conclusion, to choose a way out of my uncertainty. I sat there for hours before I achieved a decision, and it was hardly more than a com-

promise. In justice to Dr. Banks, I would tell him it was out of my power to enter into a permanent arrangement with him, for eventually I should seek a more populous district; if he cared for a temporary alliance, such terms as he offered should be accepted.

Catching sight of the newspaper in my pocket, I drew it out, and, as I did so, the letter fell from its folds to the floor. I picked it up and read the address, written in a feminine hand, all angles and straight lines, like the framework of a house, yet clear and legible. The postmark was New York. With waxing curiosity, for my correspondence was extremely limited, I broke the seal.

"My dear Dr. Morris," the letter ran, "my aunt, Mrs. Loring, desires to learn whether it will be convenient for you to receive her as a patient, and whether rooms can be secured for us near your office. She has tried a number of treatments since the voyage from Rio, but none of them has been of marked benefit to her. She remembers gratefully the success attending your ministrations on shipboard, and feels confident that your skill will bring her the relief she has sought so long. She asks me to add that this plan was in her mind when our chance meeting made it possible to secure your address.

"Yours very sincerely,
"DOROTHY GRAY."

Again and again I read these lines, poring over them as joyously as ever did Egyptologist over freshly discovered hieroglyphs which set at rest a much mooted point. Out above the rest of the letter stood two words, "for us." Mrs. Loring's niece would hardly leave her, but here was proof that both of them would come to Rodneytown. That I could succeed in convincing the elder lady that nothing serious ailed her was hardly possible; it was quite on the cards that after a month or two she would depart in a huff; but, in the mean time—Well, I didn't trouble myself with the details of that problematical period. The great central point of interest was that for several weeks, at least, Dorothy Gray and I would be thrown together. For the moment Lamar, Banks, and all my recent worries were forgotten.

"Mrs. Weston," said I, pouncing upon that good woman as she passed the door of the office, "please do me a great favor. I have an old friend—patient, I mean—who is anxious to put herself under my care. I must find a boarding-place for her. Can't you take her in?"

"Well, now, I'd real like to, doctor, but I ain't got the room," she answered, with kindly regret in her tone. "Is she all by herself?"

"No, she isn't," I confessed. "Her niece is with her."

"Little girl, is she?"

"No; a young lady," I answered, trying to avoid the consciousness of a twinkle in my hostess's eye.

"It's too bad, I'm sure, but we're a pretty full house as it is," said she. "However, don't get discouraged. Try Mis' Clark across the road: she don't use half that big house since her boys went out West. It'll be a good place, too: Mis' Clark's a good provider, and as neat as a hull paper of pins."

Over the way to the house of Clark I hastened, only to find its mistress disinclined to receive boarders. "City folks' notions," she averred, were not to be endured. But she began to relent a little when I put her yielding on the ground of a personal favor; and when I dwelt generously on Mrs. Weston's praise of her as a housekeeper, she led me up-stairs to two rooms, spick and span and very comfortable withal, and, with pretended ungraciousness, said that my friends could occupy them, provided they could "stand plain livin' and plainer comp'ny." I closed the bargain on the spot.

Mrs. Weston met me at her door, on my return late that afternoon from a drive, in the course of which the answer to Miss Gray's letter had been intrusted to the mail.

"You look like a new man," said she, approvingly. "Sakes alive! how gettin' a new patient does perk you young doctors up!"

"The more the merrier, of course," said I.

"You're lucky to get two such special suff'ers. You'll be gettin' rich, what with the new one and the old one over yonder."

She pointed to the house on the knoll, which showed a dark spot among the lowlands lying about it fresh and green and bright in the slanting rays of the setting sun, now nearing the crests of the hills to the west.

"Seems like a blot on our landscape, don't it?" she said, with her eyes still fixed on the sombre mound.

"Yes," thought I, "perhaps in more ways than one."

IX.

One evening, about a fortnight later, I stepped out of my office for the double purpose of enjoying a pipe and a stroll in the open air. The hour was late, at least for that community of early rising and early retiring, and few lights were to be seen in any of the cluster of farm-houses. A faint gleam from one of the upper rooms of the house across the way showed that Mrs. Loring was wooing slumber under the protection of her night-lamp. She and her niece, having arrived that day, were now in full possession of their new quarters. Both had stood the journey well. Mrs. Loring, in fact, was never more cheerful than when on the wing. The invalid had greeted me with effusion, while Miss Gray had displayed a cordiality that was almost too full of friendliness and too lacking in self-consciousness to please my fancy. Cheerful good-fellowship was perhaps all that I had reason to expect in her, yet it was not a very flattering result of many a *tête-à-tête* in the moonlight of the tropics.

The night was clear, and, though there was no moon, it was pleasant to stroll along, reviewing the events of our acquaintance and speculating upon the effects of its renewal. I was following the path to the knoll, and so engrossed were my meditations that on raising my eyes from the ground I was surprised to find myself close to the base of its landward slope. I was on the point of turning back, when I heard a voice, recognizable as Lamar's, which seemed to come from the northern

side of the little hill, at the base of which, as has been set forth, was one of the salt-water creeks. The words were not to be distinguished, but his tone gave evidence that the business he was engaged in had nothing alarming about it, although, from the hour selected for carrying it on, it was likely that he desired to avoid observation. It might be well to prove to him that even at such a time and place he could not be sure that some loiterer was not about, and to give a practical illustration of the need of a sentinel; at least that was the excuse I framed for advancing. Cautiously I stole by the spring and up the ascent. On the dark surface of the creek the still darker outlines of a boat could be made out. The craft was moored to the rocks, to which a man was transferring a number of cases and packages. A little way up the slope, directing the operation, stood Lamar. Intent as he was upon the task in hand, his quick ear caught the sound of my steps, and he turned toward me like a flash.

"It's I,—Morris," I called out. It was too dark to perceive his motion clearly, but I thought I detected a swift movement of his right hand toward the breast of his coat.

"Ah! You are a rambler until late," he answered. Startled as he must have been by the interruption, he spoke with all his usual deliberate coolness.

"Yes; I was wakeful, and happened to walk this way. Hearing unusual sounds, I pushed on to investigate. There was a chance, you know, that a reinforcement might be acceptable."

There was nothing in his manner to indicate whether the explanation satisfied him.

"Johnson brings a small cargo, supplies that might cause talk if obtained through the village," said he. "He will place them presently in the house."

"An excellent plan. He buys them at the larger ports up the coast, I suppose."

"Yes."

"There seems very little danger that any one should stumble upon you while the goods are being landed," said I, "but my experience to-night shows that it is possible. It might be advisable to post a sentry, for if a rumor of these midnight labors got about it would set the village by the ears."

"Hereafter the precaution shall be taken. Remain a little," he added, as I was about to go. "I, too, am wakeful. Let us converse."

He led the way to the front of the house and seated himself on the door-step.

"How of your medical practice?" he asked, when I had found a resting-place near him.

I told him of Mrs. Loring's arrival and of the probability that she would remain a considerable time in the neighborhood. She was an old acquaintance, I added. That I had met her on the voyage from Rio seemed to be a detail which it was as well not to mention. Had he learned it he might have displayed a livelier interest in the matter. As it was, however, he merely said that it was to be hoped that she would recover her health, and then changed the subject to remark that

he desired me to bring him a considerable sum of money in the course of a day or two.

"It is for Johnson," he condescended to explain.

"Very well; you shall have it," said I. "By the way, is your telegraph line to his house still in working order?"

"Yes; but it is not a telegraph, only a simple signal," he answered.

"Enter, if you choose, and I will elucidate it."

We stepped into the living-room, on one wall of which he showed me a knob, so tiny as hardly to be noticeable. By pressing it, he explained, a metal disk was made to fall at the other end of the line, conveying the intelligence to the fisherman that he was to hasten to his employer. If he was absent from home, one of his brothers would respond to the summons.

"But if all three are away?" I asked.

"That will not occur," he replied, decidedly.

"But in case they are asleep?"

"The disk, in falling, strikes a gong. There is provision for the chance."

Here was a further illustration of the ingenuity the man displayed in preparing for possible dangers. But, if he had taken the pains to insure support from Johnson in case of need, why had he not arranged a method of calling upon me also? Rather piqued, in spite of my dislike for him, I asked bluntly if some signal could not be devised.

"It is not a necessity," said he, dryly. And even had I been disposed to argue the point there would have been no opportunity to do so, for Johnson entered the room, staggering under the weight of one of the cases. He gave me his customary curt nod, and carefully deposited his burden upon a table, Lamar stepping to the door and beckoning me to follow him before I could more than guess at what the contents of the case might be. But I walked home that night possessed by a notion that, when the cover was removed, a small arsenal might be found stowed away in the box, designed to supplement the brace of revolvers I had bought for Lamar soon after our coming to the shore.

X.

There was a struggle the following morning, in which courtesy and obstinacy were finely blended, when Mrs. Loring and her medical adviser came together for a discussion of her case. The points at issue were the length, particularity, and minuteness with which she should describe her symptoms, real or imagined, the systems of treatment to which she had been subjected, the effects, good, bad, or indifferent, produced by them, and the opinions thereof, weighty or valueless, of many persons unknown to her auditor. It was a contest, valiant but unequal, and at last the woman had the man at her mercy.

"Oh, doctor, dear doctor," she rattled on, "you can't imagine how pleased—yes, rejoiced—I am to be under your care. I wish I could tell you, describe to you, the miseries I've suffered, the horrors I've

undergone at the hands of those wretches. Ugh ! it makes me shiver to think of them. But I can't tell you ; I can't bear even to think of them. Now there was that last one, so highly recommended, too. I went to him, doctor,—picture my going to him,—absolutely putting my life in his charge, doctor,—just after I had escaped from that quack who had made me take electric shocks and ride a horse—such a dreadfully hard trotting horse, too—four hours every day. And what, doctor, do you imagine that next wretch did ? Think of it ! He thrust me into what he called a 'rest-cure ;' absolutely nothing to do, nothing to see, nobody to speak to. Why, doctor, it was maddening, simply maddening !"

"My dear Mrs. Loring," I broke in, "pray do not agitate yourself with such memories. If you please——"

But she had regained breath and was again in full career. Rest-cures, water-cures, milk-cures, steam-cures ; drenchings internal and external ; pills, pads, and plasters ; sea-air and mountain-air ; massage, calisthenics, and out-door exercise ; drugs by wholesale, diets without number, treatments representing a range from the latest and best in medical science to a close approach to the superstitions of voodooism,—all these she had survived. For two long hours her tale flowed on in a flood which overwhelmed all interruptions, and when she paused at last it was rather from weariness than from an exhausted subject.

For a woman of such experiences she looked remarkably well. Her complexion was pale and sallow, and her nerves were "on edge," as she herself phrased it ; but the stethoscope showed that her lungs were not affected, and there was nothing to cause alarm in the action of the heart. Her digestion was weak,—it could hardly have been otherwise after the trials to which it had been put for so many years,—and unquestionably she had had some genuine twinges of rheumatism, but these were not very weighty reasons for traipsing about two hemispheres. As many of my predecessors had probably decided, it seemed clear to me that the best plan to pursue was to let her entertain herself with some harmless dose, and to strive to induce her to forget that she believed herself an invalid.

"Your case, Mrs. Loring, is most interesting," said I, gravely.

"And complicated," said she, earnestly. "So many physicians have spoken of complications."

"They could hardly avoid it. But that is not the point just now. I shall have to ask you to submit implicitly to my guidance. I shall give you a prescription of great efficacy, but one which must be used with rigid care. You will arise at a regular hour,—let us say seven o'clock. You will then take three drops of the medicine in a wineglass of water,—the glass must be full to the brim. Then go out of doors and walk slowly for fifteen minutes in the sunniest spot available, not for exercise, of course, but in order to have the circulation at its best to promote the action of the delicately powerful combination of drugs. I will arrange with Mrs. Clark for your breakfast diet. After breakfast you will sit in the open air for an hour, at the end of which time you will take a walk or ride. Don't return from it until the dinner-hour, when you may take a second dose. Rest for an hour after dinner, and then pass your time as you please out of doors. A third dose

should be taken at supper-time, and a fourth before retiring. I rely upon you to carry out these directions to the letter."

"Indeed I will," she promised, and then her face fell, and she leaned toward me as she asked, "Doctor, have I a tuberculous diathesis? There was a Frenchman, such a delightful man I thought at first, who talked so beautifully about that. Tell me truly, do you think I have one?"

"Mrs. Loring," I declared, earnestly, "take my word for it, you have nothing to fear on that score."

"But there was that London doctor," she persisted, "he said that I was anæmic; and he looked so wise, with his great white beard like an ancient sage. If it had not been for the snuff, perhaps—but, doctor, do please tell me if he was mistaken: I had to give him up; really, doctor, I had to; the snuff was too much."

"Another instance of groundless fears," said I.

"And hereditary tendencies? so many advisers have spoken of them, doctor, but always so indefinitely; that is, all but one was indefinite, and he—would you believe it, doctor?—he insisted that there must be gout in the family, and he would have it so, though I knew, doctor, I knew he must be mistaken, for I never remembered—never, doctor, never—my father suffering in his feet but once, and then, doctor, I know it was chilblains; I'm sure it was, doctor."

"Really, Mrs. Loring," I urged, "you have no cause of complaint against your ancestors, except possibly in that you inherit from them susceptibilities of unusual keenness. There can hardly be an escape from some of the penalties nature exacts from the possessor of an artistic temperament. The finest porcelain demands the gentlest handling. I think you catch my meaning."

"Just as I have thought, so many, many times," she declared, with a smile of delight. "You put it so feelingly, doctor,—so feelingly. You can't realize how rejoiced I am to know that I am under your treatment. I shall expect you to accomplish wonders, doctor, really wonders."

"We shall do our best, you and I, and much can be counted on from the medicine you are to take. But remember, please, that the directions for its use are to be followed exactly."

Her face brightened.

"You won't mind showing me the prescription, will you?" she said. "I dearly love to see them, although of course I can't read them. They're like the hieroglyphics in the museum, so interesting and instructive; don't you think so, doctor?"

"Why, certainly you can see it," said I, scribbling away on a sheet of my note-book. "Here it is."

She took the paper, and surveyed it with something approaching awe, in spite of her long acquaintance with such documents.

Probably it was well for both of us that she could make nothing of it. There was quassia, to give an impressively vigorous flavor to the compound; tincture of asafetida, for the sake of its bouquet; burnt sugar, to supply the proper color effect; and aqua pura to the amount of eight ounces. It would be an evil-tasting, evil-smelling,

evil-looking mixture, quite capable of satisfying the patient's craving for gruesome potions, but harmless enough, notwithstanding its warnings to the senses.

"So reassuring, isn't it, doctor, to have things in black and white?" said she. "One sees them so much more vividly, don't you know?"

"Proof of the value of the eyes, Mrs. Loring."

"Indeed it is. That thought has occurred to me often, yes, so often." She sighed gently, as if there were something melancholy in the reflection.

"I shall drive to Bassettville this afternoon to have the prescription made up," I told her as I bade her good-morning; and her thanks pursued me as I hastened down the stairs and out of the house. Once out of range of her sight and voice, I paused to wipe my forehead, as a man will after finishing a long and trying task, no matter whether he be philosopher or navvy. I had a very kindly feeling for Mrs. Loring, and it was as much a part of my business to listen to her complaints as it was to endeavor to remove their cause, but no amount of reiteration of the fact sufficed to reconcile me to the infliction. She spoke so rapidly, and with so many exclamations, that her talk jarred on one's nerves as quickly as a brisk but irregular hammering. The lot of her niece, as her constant companion, was not to be envied; it was strange that it was not the girl who was in need of medical attendance. What an agreeable patient Miss Gray would have been! But, after all, I reflected, Dorothy Gray well was to be preferred to Dorothy Gray ill. And the next reflection, in natural sequence, was, where was she to be found?

No one was visible about the Clark premises; evidently the young lady was out for a stroll. Somewhat regretfully, I crossed the road to Mrs. Weston, who was enjoying one of her rare respites from household duties.

"I've got a new hired man," she proclaimed; "come 'long to-day, and I jes' hired him on the spot. My, but it's a relief! Till them boys grow up I'll never feel real easy unless we've a good, steady man on the farm."

"Who is he? and where's he from?" I asked, knowing that a failure to evince interest in her acquisition would be highly unwise.

"I guess he's a tramp, though he looks kinder spruce for one of 'em. His name's Hiram Jones. You can see him weedin' over yonder."

"It strikes me he's a little awkward at it," I suggested, after a brief survey of the new-comer.

"Well, he comes cheap; seemed like he'd take 'most anything, he was that set to get work."

"Then he's not a tramp," said I. "By the way, will you have him harness my horse about two o'clock? Excuse me," I added, hastily, for Miss Gray had come into view as she turned the corner of the house over the way,—“excuse me, I want to speak to that young lady."

The girl saw me as I hurried toward her, and, pausing, awaited me at the porch steps.

"Good-morning, doctor," she said, with a hint of a smile, perhaps at the speed with which I had made toward her.

"Good-morning," I responded. "I hope you find your rooms comfortable?"

"They are very pleasant. But what do you think of my aunt?"

"Oh, she's well enough," said I, unguardedly. "That is, I mean, she's well enough comparatively; well enough, you know, to encourage me greatly, though you of course understand, far better than I can tell at first, how much she suffers."

She probably gauged my diagnosis correctly, although she said, gravely, "I am very glad to learn that you are hopeful."

"Of course we cannot expect any rapid improvement," I added, in my most professional tone. "Chronic cases involve slow recoveries."

"I must go to her now," said the girl, paying, it seemed to me, rather slight heed to the great truth I had stated. "I'm afraid I've sadly neglected her this morning."

"I am going to drive to Bassettville this afternoon at two o'clock to have a prescription filled," I hastened to say. "I should be delighted to have you come with me. You couldn't have had an opportunity to enjoy the scenery when you went over the road yesterday. Please come, do; the views are very pretty."

"But my aunt?" said she, doubtfully.

"It will do her good. The fact that I advise you to leave her for a few hours will prove to her that she is already beginning to pick up in this splendid, vitalizing atmosphere. Besides, as we ride along, I can post you on the treatment mapped out for her."

There was quiet amusement in her eyes as she listened to this ingenuous plea, but she permitted it to end her hesitancy,—which was all it was designed to accomplish.

"The day is too alluringly charming," she said. "I can't resist the temptation. I shall be ready at two."

As I turned from the porch I had a glimpse of Mrs. Weston's face disappearing through her door-way, and from its cheery smile I conjectured that the good soul heartily approved of the little scene which had taken place across the way.

XI.

Hiram Jones, the new farm-hand, certainly had one merit,—he obeyed orders. Precisely at two o'clock my horse and buggy stood before the office door. The fact that he was on time made me study the fellow's looks, as one gazes with interest at some prodigy developed in an altogether unexpected place. He was stout and well built, with little of the slouching clumsiness of the typical ploughboy. His face, though far from stolid, was not attractive, and several days' growth of beard helped to lessen such slight claims to comeliness as it might have possessed. His garments were coarse and stained, and his boots were old and worn.

"You're prompt," I observed, as he relinquished the reins. "It's a good plan."

"It's easy 'nough," he answered, gruffly, and, turning on his heel, walked away.

At another time his manner might have annoyed me, but just then I had other interests in life than speculations as to the crudities of farm-laborers' civilization. Miss Gray was ready for the start, and in a moment or two the bay was leisurely beginning his afternoon's work, to all appearances the sleepest old roadster in the State. I had thought the vehicle well enough in its way, but now I noticed the dust on its body and the cakes of dried mud on the tires and spokes, and a suspicion crossed my mind that horse, carriage, and very possibly driver contrasted oddly, and not to their advantage, with the trim, well-dressed young person beside me.

"I believe I can guess your thoughts," I said, not too amiably. "You're marvelling at my fiery steed. Am I right?"

"In part, yes," she answered; "but only in part."

"And what do you think of him?"

"That he is very quiet and gentle, and very well suited to a physician's uses."

"So far, so good; but is that all?"

"About the horse, yes."

"May I risk asking if your thoughts turned from him to his master?"

There was a little pause before she spoke, and, looking at her out of the corner of my eye, I thought her cheek flushed a bit.

"It was merely a question which suggested itself," she said. "I was wondering whether the evident fitness of the horse for his work meant that his master looked upon this village as his permanent field."

It was now my turn to hesitate.

"Really," I said, at last, "it is a hard question to answer. I can say neither yes nor no. I can't get beyond the present. May I not be content with that?"

"Do you think it is enough for you,—for any young professional man?"

"But if it satisfies me?"

"Does it?"

"At this particular instant, yes; at other times, when I can't get away from myself, no."

There was another pause, and when she spoke again it was to ask me the routine to be followed by her aunt. While I described it, she listened as soberly as if she had no room to doubt that the invalid was close to death's door. Before the recital was finished we had begun to traverse one of the level stretches. I tightened the reins, and the bay lengthened his strides; a chirrup or two, and his lazy air was shaken off and his hoof-beats rang quick and sharp upon the hard road. Away we went at a pace far below his best, but one which would have left most of the local trotters hopelessly in the rear. Pulling him up when we reached a rise in the grade, I turned to the girl a little triumphantly.

The swift motion had brought a new light into her eyes, and the rush of the wind had heightened her delicate color.

"That was delightful," she cried. "Let me confess at once, I misjudged your horse cruelly. He has wonderfully exceeded expectations."

"The brute has redeemed himself easily," said I. "Would it were as light a task for the man!"

"Perhaps the man has not been misjudged, after all. But come, Dr. Morris, you've told me almost nothing of your adventures for the last two or three years. Surely you must have had some before coming here?"

"The short and simple annals—you know the line. The city was not generous; there is almost nothing more to tell. Believe me, you are fortunate, indeed, to escape any risk of the monotony of a humdrum existence. I envy you the variety of scene and surroundings which has fallen to your lot."

"As if there could be no monotony in variety; as if one could not grow weary of it!" she cried. "Why, Dr. Morris, it is the superlative of monotony. Many a time I've been tempted to recall approvingly the growls of an irascible old Englishman we met in Spain. 'Madam,' said he to my aunt, 'take my word for it, all hotels are bad, but some are worse than others; all strangers are obnoxious, but some are pestilential; all sight-seeing is a weariness of the flesh, and the more one has of it the greater the burden becomes.'"

"And Mrs. Loring?"

"His vehemence startled her, and she fled at the first opportunity."

"Yet she could have heeded the tirade to advantage. In all sincerity, let me say that until she consents to settle down quietly for a considerable time there is not much hope of effecting her cure. You must have observed that on a journey she seems to be at her best, but that when the trip is ended there is a reaction, and after a few weeks she is off again, finding in the renewed excitement relief which, in turn, has to be paid for at a high rate. When her greatest need is rest she applies the spur. If ever there was a victim of the travel habit, she is one. Can she not be persuaded to give her recuperative powers a fair chance to assert themselves? One can't do better than to let nature alone sometimes. This is plain talk, plainer than I should like to address directly to your aunt; but it is due to you, for in many ways you can help to put it into practice."

"And I will help only too gladly," said the girl, earnestly. "Please be assured of that."

"Is it a bargain, then?"

"Indeed it is."

"May it be a successful one?" said I. "And now, Miss Gray, you may be pleased to know that from this turn in the road can be had the only view of Bassettville which warrants a claim of beauty for the place."

We drove into the town and turned into its principal street, halting in front of the shop of its solitary druggist. While I stood before the

counter, waiting for the prescription to be made up, Sam Carpenter sauntered in.

"I kinder wanted ter see ye," he remarked, after the weather, the state of trade, and town politics had been discussed. "'Tain't much, but maybe yer'd like ter know about it."

"What's the trouble?" said I.

"Wall, a couple o' days ago a chap come ter my stable an' hung round till we got ter talkin'. He didn't seem ter have no special biz'-ness agitatin' him, but he did seem all-fired cur'ous. Pretty soon he got round ter that old brewer from Charleston, South Car'liny, you're doctorin'. Seemed mighty interested in him,—too mighty interested, I reckoned. When a neighbor's boy asks me how my apples is gettin' on I put it down ter friendliness, but when I catch him up the tree I call him too blamed affectionate. So, as this chap was tryin' ter pump me, I tried ter pump him, but I guess neither of us got any more satisfaction than the schoolmaster did when he tackled the parson's Hebrew book, thinkin' it was Greek. Struck me ye might as well know about him, though."

"What was his name?" I asked.

"He didn't say."

"Can you describe him?"

"Hefty fer his inches; old clothes, trousers tucked in his boots; kinder springy in his walk; more dirt than tan on his face. I kept an eye on him, an' saw him, after hangin' round a spell, steer fer the Rodneytown road."

"Thanks for the information," said I. "Probably he is some tramp who has heard yarns about my patient, and, having nothing better to do, asks questions to keep talk going. Nevertheless, I'm much obliged for the tip."

"That's all right," Carpenter responded, with the air of a man who feels that he has done his duty. "Say, how's the hoss suitin' yer?"

"Excellently. It's a pity, though, there's so little style about him."

"If he had style, ye'd never got him fer the price ye paid. He ain't the kind of a hoss a pretty girl likes ter hev hitched in front of her house on a Sunday afternoon,—that's a fact,—but fer plain week-day use he's O. K."

"He's hard-mouthed. That's a drawback. Quiet as he is, you wouldn't call him a lady's horse, would you?"

"No, I wouldn't," said Sam, oracularly. "A lady's hoss—that's any good—is as sceerce as an angel hoss; and angel hosses 's as sceerce as angel men."

The drive back to Rodneytown was hardly as pleasant as the first half of the trip had been, for both of us were inclined to taciturnity. Miss Gray doubtless was busy with thoughts of her aunt, while for me the afternoon was spoiled by Carpenter's tidings. It had been a luxury to forget the house on the knoll, if only for an hour or two, and here was this news, very probably of no moment, yet enough to remind me of my thralldom, to drag me back to a realization of the fact that

Lamar had the first claim upon me. Of course he would have to be told of the incident of the suspicious stranger, and told at once, with the possibility quite within reason that he would decide to seek a new asylum without delay. In that case I might find myself bidding Mrs. Loring and her niece an unceremonious adieu, or I might be left behind with my chief source of revenue cut off. In either event I should be a heavy loser. And, worst of all, I could devise no way in which to shake off my helplessness. A hint as to the identity of the stranger had suggested itself as soon as Carpenter attempted to portray the man. So far as it went, his description fitted the new farm-hand,—just as it probably fitted half the tramps in that region. While the story threw suspicion upon the fellow's motives, and might prove most useful as a warning, it was not, of course, in itself sufficient to warrant a demand for his discharge. The outcome of all these unsatisfactory reflections was a determination to lay the matter before the person most interested, and to abide wholly by his judgment.

Early in the evening, anxious to be done with a bad business as speedily as possible, I visited Lamar and told him all I had heard or surmised. He listened to the story with the closest attention, asked a few questions as to the appearance of the man under suspicion, and then, puffing calmly at his eternal cigar, sat in silence for several moments, seemingly undisturbed by the possibility of a new complication in his affairs.

"Well," said I, at last, no longer able to restrain the question, "what are we to do?"

"For the present—nothing. As it is said, 'Forewarned is forearmed.'"

"But this uncertainty must be cleared up. You know better than I can why this man may have come here, provided, of course, that he has any designs upon you. It's all theory, you understand, but it is strange that he should be working for Mrs. Weston at very low wages, unless he has some particular reason for desiring to be in this neighborhood. Were employment his only object, he could do far better in the village. The more I think it over, the plainer it seems he wants to be where he can keep an eye on this house."

"It is probable."

"Then," said I, puzzled by his indifference, "can't something be done to checkmate him?"

"It is not necessary. He is of this country?"

"At least I'll warrant English is his native tongue."

"The case, then, is simple. He labors under a mistake."

"But even that mistake may cause trouble," I protested.

"For the present, not at all. In the end, it is possible," he answered, as coolly as if the matter was of slight concern.

"What are your directions?" I asked, still by no means satisfied with his philosophical view of the case.

"Observe him well, study him as you choose, but do not attempt to disturb him. These things will suffice. Even if he intrudes here, there is no cause for alarm: he shall be suitably received."

And, with one of his grim smiles, Lamar bade me good-night.

XII.

Hiram Jones, tramp, farm-laborer, busybody, detective, or whatever he might be, furnished for a month my principal cause for anxiety. Lamar's indifference to the man's doings was more than I could explain to my own satisfaction; for, if the owner of the house on the knoll had reason to fear any great peril, how was it that he could hear so calmly tidings which indicated at least that he was under surveillance? It was as if a wily old fox, after a long run from the hunter, should sit contentedly watching a stray hound circling about him, instead of retreating post-haste out of danger. There was certainly the argument that Lamar should know very well the particular point from which he was menaced, and the character of the agents likely to be employed against him; but I could not find it convincing. Greatly as I disliked him, his apathy fretted me. Even enemies, when fate makes them partners, can generally be counted upon to co-operate to win the game. Now, here was I, quite ready to do my best to beat our mysterious opponents, yet hampered, or at least discouraged, by the indifference of the player whose stakes were hazarded upon the result. The situation seemed to be entirely false.

If Jones was a spy, I in turn diligently played the spy upon him. No time was lost in confirming his identity with that of the man who had aroused Carpenter's suspicions, a result easily accomplished by bringing the horse-dealer on a pretended errand to Rodneytown and having Jones at work near the house as he drove by. After this preliminary, I devoted many hours to watching Mrs. Weston's retainer, without getting much reward for my pains. The man went about his various tasks in the most matter-of-fact fashion, apparently concerned in nothing beyond them. I had expected that as soon as he learned of my daily visits to the house on the knoll he would attempt to question me about its occupant; but not once did he display interest in my hermit-patient. In short, the only new ground given for my suspicions was furnished by a habit he developed of solitary strolls about the neighborhood when evening put an end to his work on the farm. A little of his gruffness had worn off, and, barring this liking for lonely rambles, there was nothing to distinguish him from the other laborers of the vicinity. Lamar listened patiently to the reports of my observations, which appeared to increase his belief that there was no cause for immediate alarm, though he still neglected to give the reasons for his conviction. It may be that, undisturbed as he was in his own mind, he was satisfied to have me maintain vigilance. After all, it was not to be denied that standing guard was part of the business for which he paid me.

But the month was a pleasant one, except for Jones and the worries he created. Mrs. Loring was doing surprisingly well. Nobody could have expected her to regard herself as anything but a confirmed invalid, but with increasing frequency she was enjoying intervals of oblivion to the fact that she supposed herself to be a sufferer. She took her harmless doses with clockwork regularity, and there was not one of the directions given her which was not carried out with scientific

accuracy. Simple food, good air, undisturbed sleep, and trifles enough to keep her interested were doing for her what they will do for most of the race. Two or three additions had been made to her code of directions, with not altogether unselfish motives on the part of her medical adviser. For one thing, she now kept a diary, in which she wrote her observations of her symptoms. Ostensibly, this was to secure, for scientific purposes, a record of the progress of a most notable case: actually, it was to save her doctor from a daily flood of talk. Then, too, she had been persuaded that it was not wise to have her niece constantly with her, the theory followed being that Miss Gray had been so long her nurse that their continual association could not but remind her of her impaired health. This bit of sophistry was far more convincing to the elder woman than to the younger, who, though she acquiesced in the arrangement, left me no doubt that she regarded the argument as fallacious. Inasmuch, however, as through it I secured a great deal more of her society, I was content, my object thus accomplished. Moreover, to this day it seems clear to me that in forcing Mrs. Loring to throw off somewhat of her acquired feeling of helplessness, and to learn that she was not entirely dependent on her companion's ministrations, I did her a great service. So far as the girl was concerned, there could be no question of the benefit she received from the lessening of her hours of attendance upon her aunt. No calling, as we all know, is more noble, more self-sacrificing, than that of the nurse; in none is there greater need of reasonable relaxation from the demands upon body, mind, and spirit; and never is devotion more sadly misapplied than in those cases in which the tribute to supposed duty and real affection is paid needlessly or in obedience to another's over-indulged caprice. The light of common sense should be strong enough to show the flaw of uselessness in many a picture of uncomplaining martyrdom.

As events proved, the country life was much to Mrs. Loring's taste, in spite of her years of travel and her long sojourns in great cities. She struck up friendships with Mrs. Clark, Mrs. Weston, and the other housewives of the neighborhood, and, through them, with the residents of Rodneytown village, among whom she gained considerable popularity. She became a regular attendant at the village church, and soon was received into the circle of its sewing-society. At these things I marvelled and rejoiced, knowing very well that her new friends could do more to promote her recovery than all the drugs in the pharmacopœia. Seven days in the week, gossip was better for her than tonics.

It was almost inevitable, in the circumstances, that I should be honored often with Dorothy Gray's company. Long drives together over the winding country roads, walks to the show spots of the vicinity, and rambles when the moon was doing her best to make mankind believe that nothing in the world was worth considering but sentiment, such pleasing diversions filled many an hour. Sometimes I paused to consider how completely the girl was dominating my thoughts. Even when a glimpse of Hiram Jones going stolidly about his business reminded me of the uncertainty of my position, I found myself specu-

lating more about what she might think, if the worst came to pass, than about the extent of the misfortune hovering over Lamar's head, and possibly over mine as well. On shipboard we had been very good friends, she and I. We were very good friends now, but with a difference. What a dull ride I had if she declined to accompany me! how the evening dragged if she kept out of sight! what a wretched substitute for her presence was even the best pipe in my growing collection! How was it that when we were together, even if our talk languished, the time never passed heavily? How had it come about that I no longer debated the question of her beauty, no longer compared her with this girl or that? Such questions I asked myself now and then, puzzling my brain with endeavors to answer them in any other way than the one in which they could be answered. The simple truth of the matter was, of course, that I had fallen in love; but for difficulty of comprehension commend me, above all things, to a so-called simple truth. Anybody, if he will take the trouble, can follow out a long and logical deduction, but to very few men is it given to perceive at once the meaning of the thing which, once understood, we call self-evident.

From the vantage-point of later years I have figured out, to my own satisfaction at least, that I passed from the comparatively placid state of friendship about two weeks after Dorothy Gray's arrival in Rodneytown. The realization of the change came nearly a fortnight later, not through any triumph of reason, but through an accident in which my part was that of a mere spectator, and which required less time in action than it does in telling. Returning one morning from the house on the knoll, I sought the young lady, as I usually sought her at that hour. Dr. Banks had asked me to look out for two or three of his more distant patients,—he had sprained his right arm badly and was keeping as quiet as possible,—and that day I had planned a long drive, which it was probable she would enjoy. She was not in the house, Mrs. Clark said, and I was gazing about rather disconsolately, when I caught sight of a parasol showing above the walls of a lane leading to an orchard, in the shade of which Miss Gray sometimes passed a morning. Setting out in pursuit, I gained upon her so rapidly that when I turned into the lane she was not more than a hundred yards in the lead. To my surprise, she halted, then turned with a cry, and, picking up her skirts, began to scud toward me, in full flight, as I saw an instant later, from an old and evil-tempered boar, usually safely penned behind Mrs. Clark's barn, but evidently very much at liberty at that particular moment. The brute was close to her. His tusks looked as long and sharp as knives; as he galloped on, they came nearer and nearer to his prey. I gave a shout and sprang forward, but had she been forced to depend upon my aid her danger would have been great indeed, for long before I could have reached her the boar would have overtaken her. He was right at her heels, when, armed with a stout club, Jones sprang over the wall and struck viciously at the brute. The blow fell fairly upon the animal's snout, and ended abruptly his pursuit of the maiden, who, however, sped on until she ran almost into my arms. I got her hands in mine and took some

time to assure her that she was safe, before coming down to the mere detail that the farm-hand had been her rescuer. She turned to thank the man, but by this time he was some distance up the lane, driving the cowed and grunting boar back to his prison.

"I envy that fellow," said I. "I'd give anything to have had that chance he improved."

"Would you?" said she, with a nervous little smile. "It was a dangerous privilege. Ugh!" and she shuddered at the recollection. "What a terrible animal that was! I never was so frightened in all my life."

"Let us go back to the house," I suggested. "You will hardly enjoy a visit to the orchard after such an adventure."

"No, indeed," she said. "After this I shall be more careful. I have learned something from this experience."

"And so have I," was my thought, for in that moment of her peril the veil of doubts and questions and theories and speculations had been torn from my eyes, and I had learned the simple truth which explained them all, yet which they had served to hide from me.

XIII.

"Sakes alive! what's keepin' that Hiram?"

There could be no mistaking that voice, which penetrated my office, though the speaker was out of sight. It was not a voice of smooth tones and delicate inflections, yet it was attractive in a homely, everyday sort of way, therein resembling its owner. Now and then it grew sharp, when circumstances were particularly trying, but it never suggested nagging. At this particular moment there was in it a note of anxiety, which roused me from a pleasant after-dinner half-doze to throw up a window and send a glance toward the gate, where Mrs. Weston stood, shading her eyes with her hand, the better to peer down the road.

"What's the trouble?" I sang out to her.

"That pesky Hiram oughter been back hours ago," said she. "What can he be a-doin' of, anyhow?"

"Where did you send him?"

"Down to the beach with the team, after a load of gravel."

"Perhaps he's been bogged. It's quite possible, if he didn't keep his eyes open. Just where did you bid him go?"

"I told him the best place was the South Cove, but he might find some good 'nough at a pinch near Johnson's. Whichever place he went, he oughter be back. I want to see him partic'lar this afternoon."

"So do I. If he turns up in the next half-hour, please let me know of it."

"Yes, indeed, doctor, I'll be glad to," she answered; and after a parting survey of the neighborhood she re-entered the house. It was the afternoon following the day on which Jones had come to the aid of Miss Gray in such timely fashion, but neither she nor I had yet succeeded in getting an opportunity to thank him for his assistance.

Both of us were anxious to prove our gratitude, and Dorothy, as I knew, had decided to give him a token of it in the shape of a trinket, a quaintly carved watch-charm, which she had picked up in one of her trips abroad. All things considered, it was rather a curious choice she had made, although the thing was sufficiently pretty to appeal to even the untrained instincts of the boor she had every reason to suppose him to be. So far as I was concerned, the question was more puzzling, but I had determined to offer him money. Whether he would accept it was doubtful, but, at any rate, the proffer might be made, with the alternative idea of picking out some present later on which would meet his approval in case he declined the cash.

The half-hour passed with no tidings of the missing man. After another fruitless survey of the road, Mrs. Weston, dolefully shaking her head, vanished again, after once more informing me that his prolonged absence was wholly inexplicable. Presently one of her sons brought my horse and carriage to the door, and, somewhat reluctantly, I forsook the cool quiet of the office to begin the drive to the house of one of the patients whom I was attending during Dr. Banks's convalescence from his injury. Miss Gray was reading in the shade of the porch of the house over the way, and, in hopes of persuading her to join me, I crossed the road and went up to her.

"Really, I should be delighted, but I've promised my aunt to see her safely off," said she, in response to my invitation. "You know she is to take tea in the village, and her hostess is to send for her I don't know at just what hour."

"Oh, then there's no hope for me," said I, grumpily. "However, I shall be back in an hour or two. I'm expecting Dr. Banks to call for my report of the case, and he may appear before my return. If he does, will you kindly ask him to wait for me? Then, too, if Jones condescends to drive up with his load of gravel, and you happen to speak to him, please be so good as to tell him that I should like to see him."

"If you care to wait a little," she answered, "we may interview him together. The team is in sight now."

Looking along the track toward the house on the knoll, I saw Mrs. Weston's horses jogging homeward at a trot, which indicated that the wagon they drew could not be loaded very heavily.

"Where's the driver?" Miss Gray asked. "Do you see him?"

"No, I don't," said I. "Quiet as the team is, it must have got away from him."

One of the boys ran to the approaching horses and stopped them. We could see him pick up the reins from the ground, examine the wagon, and climb to the seat. By the time he drove up to us, Mrs. Weston, Mrs. Clark, and one or two others had joined the group, and Mrs. Loring was looking down upon us from the window of her room.

"Dorothy, Dorothy!" she called out, "tell me, tell me, has anything happened? anything terrible? Where, oh, where is the man? Is he dead? Is he killed? Oh, Dorothy, I'm sure he must be!"

"Don't be alarmed, Mrs. Loring," said I, saving her niece the trouble of explaining that nobody knew more about the matter than

she did. "The horses have probably started for home while Jones's eye was off them. No doubt he'll be along in an hour or so."

She tried to ask more questions, but no one took the time to answer them. All of us were busily inspecting the wagon and its steeds. The conveyance was loaded to perhaps a quarter of its capacity. One of the movable side-boards was gone, but that was the limit of damage.

"It's all plain enough," said I. "The horses became homesick and trotted off, very possibly while Jones, not satisfied with the gravel he had found, was prospecting for better. He'll be here in time for supper, with a splendid appetite from his tramp."

"I guess that's about it," said Mrs. Weston, with a sigh of relief. "But it's queer, I must say. Might as well count it a day wasted."

"Which is a sin—in New England," I whispered to Miss Gray. "Come, now, can't you change your mind?"

She smiled and shook her head. Climbing into the buggy, I drove off, wishing her aunt's teas and social observances in Tophet, and trying to resign myself to a dull afternoon. The bay appeared to be unusually slothful, but I let him choose his own pace, and away we dawdled toward our destination. The sufferer proved to be convalescing satisfactorily; but the doctor's visit was an event of importance, and half an hour passed before I could get away from the sick-room. Then came a slow progress back to the Weston residence. As I drove up to it, Miss Gray emerged from my office, caught sight of me, and called to some one within. A moment later Dr. Banks followed her, and hurried out to the road.

"For God's sake, Morris, come in as quick as you can," he cried. "There's been a terrible piece of business."

Reassured as to Dorothy Gray's safety by the sight of her, and therefore ready to deal courageously with the misfortune of anybody else, I sprang to the ground and followed Banks into the office. There on a lounge lay Jones, his face ashen pale, his eyes closed, and great beads of sweat on his forehead; his breathing was heavy and stertorous, and broken by low moans. His right boot and the leg of his trousers had been cut away, revealing the limb crushed from the knee down into a horrible wreck of bone and muscle, with a jagged fragment of the tibia protruding through the skin.

Banks's eye caught mine for an instant; both of us read the meaning of the look we exchanged.

"No alternative," said he.

"The sooner the better," I added.

The senior glanced at his disabled arm.

"This puts me out of it," said he, "except as I may manage to administer the anæsthetic. Have you ever conducted such an operation?"

"Never. I saw plenty of the sort in my student days, but since then—well, I've never pretended to be a surgeon, you understand."

"Nor, to tell the truth, have I. In fact, I've always hated to see the knife used. But there's no question here."

"Let us send to Bassettville for Fowler. I've heard he's a clever operator."

"He is: the idea had already suggested itself to me. But it will mean four or five hours,—perhaps more. And whom shall we send? I'm too crippled to be of any use, and you ought to stay here."

"My horse is ready," said I. "Now for a messenger."

"Why not let me go?" suggested Dorothy Gray. She had been standing behind us so quietly that we had forgotten her presence. "I know the road," she went on, "and I think I can manage the horse without trouble."

"The very person," cried Banks, before I could utter an objection. "Miss Gray understands the circumstances better than any of us. If we send a boy he'll muddle the story so that Fowler won't be able to make head or tail of it."

"But——" I began.

"Now, Dr. Morris, please don't object," she broke in. "There is not the ghost of a reason why I should not go. I realize what Dr. Fowler is to do, the operation he will have to perform. I'm not a bit afraid of the horse. Besides, as Dr. Banks says, there must be no delay; every moment is precious. Please let me start at once."

"I don't like the idea," I protested, but rather feebly in the face of her entreaty. It had come, by this time, to be hard to deny her anything.

"After his timely assistance to me," she went on, "it is only fair that I should be allowed to reciprocate, to do some little thing to prove my gratitude."

"Very well, go, then," said I, shortly; but in the heart of me there was a vague feeling of relief that she should so soon repay her obligation to the man from whom I certainly had no good to expect: it was better for them to be quits as speedily as possible.

"She will round out a useful day by bringing Fowler here," said Dr. Banks, as we stood watching her hurry off for her hat and gloves. "Did you know that it was she who found him?"

"No," I answered. "How did it happen?"

"Her aunt, it seems, must have been a good deal worried about the man's failure to return with his team, and to ease her mind Miss Gray promised to keep a lookout for him. At last Mrs. Loring had to start for the village, but meantime Miss Gray had caught some of her aunt's fears, and, as soon as she was free, off she started on a hunt of her own. She followed the wagon-tracks almost to the house of that lonesome patient of yours, Morris. Then the trail turned to the southward, almost skirting the edge of the bog. It was a queer route to pick out for hauling a heavy load, and soon she had cause to believe that Jones had found the road rough, for in one place she saw a heap of gravel which undoubtedly had been dumped out of the wagon in some way. The ground thereabouts is very low,—a sort of hollow, in fact,—and in the depression she found herself out of sight of this house. In the other direction she could get a glimpse of your patient's dwelling, but nobody seemed to be stirring about the place. Not many yards beyond the gravel she discovered Jones, lying unconscious on the ground, with the ruts showing where the wheels of the wagon had passed over his leg. He came to a bit, after she reached him, and she

was able to make out that he had slipped under the wheels, and had been so badly hurt that he was unable to move, and was forced to lie there and watch his horses wander away from him, and finally, striking the path in this direction, turn into it and trot off homeward.

"Miss Gray tried to get assistance from your patient's; but, though she beat with all her might upon the door, no answer came from the house. Then, in despair, she came here. Luckily, I happened along just then. We got out a spring-wagon and brought Jones in,—Miss Gray accompanying us and helping like the true woman she is, hardly faltering once, though you can imagine the job it was to lift him off the ground and into the wagon. Well, he's been in your office for the last half-hour, and what little can be done for him has been done. It's a fearful injury he has. I never saw such a mass of fractured bones and torn flesh. Amputation is the only hope to save his life."

"What do you consider his chance is?" I asked.

The old doctor shook his head doubtfully.

"He's young, and ought to have a fine constitution," he said, "but it will be a close thing for him, a very close thing, I'm afraid."

Dorothy came running up to us. I assisted her into the buggy.

"Don't use the whip; he'll go well enough without it," I counselled her. "Remember, he's hard-mouthed, and that if you get him waked up too thoroughly you'll have trouble holding him."

"I shall remember," she said, with a smile, and then she added, in a voice so low that Banks could not hear her words, "I am very, very grateful to you. You are trusting in me, and you shall not be disappointed."

XIV.

While we physicians busied ourselves in the room in which the injured man lay, making such preparations as were in our power for the grim event on the result of which a life depended, Dorothy Gray was driving briskly along the Bassettville road. The task she had undertaken was simple, but none the less important for that fact; she had merely to cover more than a score of miles in the shortest time possible. For many girls of her acquaintance the undertaking would have been the easiest thing imaginable; and with a good deal of envy she recalled the skill shown by one or two of her friends on occasions when the moving cause was nothing more weighty than a chance to display prowess as a whip. Unfortunately for her, she had seldom held the reins over anything more spirited than the lazy animals occasionally hired by her aunt on a specific guarantee that in no way could they be started out of a slow trot, hardly faster than the walk for which all of them evinced a strong preference; and, although she had gained a very fair understanding of the idiosyncrasies of the roadster in front of her, her knowledge had the drawback of being for the most part theoretical. Still, she had not begun the journey without duly considering its conditions, and, on the whole, they were favorable to a novice. The road was good, though here and there very narrow, as is sometimes the case with rural highways; there were no sharp pitches

of the kind to shake untrained nerves; and the horse, so far as she knew, was utterly unacquainted with the equine joys of bolting. Not to press him at first—that was her plan, for much haste might mean little speed in the end.

For the first half-mile she drove almost leisurely, but when she had reached the top of the ridge which bordered the lowlands along the shore, she tightened the reins a little, and felt instantly the roadster's response to the summons. He settled down to the work before him as if he liked it, with the long telling stride which covered ground with such deceptive ease. A quarter of a mile ahead was a buckboard, bearing two passengers and drawn by a horse which, she saw as she came closer, was trotting steadily. It surprised her to observe how rapidly she overhauled the other conveyance, even when the driver, after a look over his shoulder, plied his whip with the evident intention of giving her a race. A few hundred yards showed him the hopelessness of the contest, and, with native courtesy and perhaps a shrewd guess that his own wheels would be the safer for allowing the stranger a generous share of the road, he pulled his vehicle well out of the way as she sped by him. She caught the look of curiosity on his face as he turned in his seat to watch her swift progress.

There was just the tinge of excitement in the ride to make her forget for a time the sorry cause of it. The coolness of approaching evening was upon the land, although the sun was still well above the horizon, and what little breeze was stirring blew in her face. On she went, now across a plain, now surmounting a gentle acclivity, now winding along a valley among the low hills, but always with the same smooth motion, as steady as it was fleet. An old weather-stained farmhouse sprang into view on her right. She remembered that it was counted as marking the half-way point on the road. A glance at her watch showed that, even with her slow start, she had covered a little more than five miles in twenty-four minutes. With fifteen or sixteen miles yet to be traversed this might be doing too much; and on the next rising grade she set herself to the task of slackening the speed. There was somewhat of a struggle between horse and driver, but at last she won. More than once was the test repeated before Bassettville was reached, but when she turned into the main street of the town her watch told her that less than fifty minutes had sufficed to cover the first half of the trip.

A pretty little woman was sitting on Dr. Fowler's door-step as the fair messenger drove up. She came briskly to the gate, and, leaning upon it, listened intently to the girl's brief account of the accident and the urgent need of a surgeon's services.

"But the doctor's away," the little woman said. "He has gone to Trent, and I don't expect him back before midnight,—I'm Mrs. Fowler, you know."

"But can't we reach him by telegraph?" Dorothy asked, anxiously. "Is there no way? The case is so desperate. Isn't there anything we can do?"

Mrs. Fowler shook her head. "No," she answered, regretfully, for she was proud of her husband's surgical skill, "I shouldn't know

where to address a telegram, and there's no train till the late one. Who is in charge of the case now?"

"Dr. Morris—that is, Dr. Banks. I suppose he is in charge, with Dr. Morris assisting him."

"Umph! Dr. Banks—I know him. The other I don't."

The lady's tone expressed very little confidence in the surgical talent of Rodneytown.

"Dr. Banks has a sprained wrist, and Dr. Morris is a—a—specialist in a—a—nervous diseases," Dorothy hastened to explain. "They united in sending for Dr. Fowler."

"Oh, I understand," said Dr. Fowler's wife, amicably. "It is dreadfully unfortunate that he is away."

"Mrs. Fowler, please advise me," said Dorothy, earnestly. "The doctors argue that an immediate operation offers the only hope of saving the man's life. I am sent here for a surgeon. I find him gone. What should I do?"

"There's nobody else here I'd trust with a cat's life. Dr. Morse—I mean Morris—must operate, or you will have to wait for my husband's return. He can hardly get to Rodneytown before two or three o'clock in the morning."

A new doubt assailed the girl. How about instruments? Banks and I should have them, she supposed, but there was the chance that we were unprepared with suitable appliances. As briefly as possible she told Mrs. Fowler what was in her mind.

"Sure enough," cried the little woman. "I don't believe old Dr. Banks has anything of the sort. We'll not risk it, anyway."

She ran into the house, returning in a moment with a case under her arm.

"Here's a set of instruments," said she. "Take it: my husband has another. Get back to Rodneytown as quick as you can. If they decide to wait for Dr. Fowler they can send word over this evening. Oh, don't bother about thanking me: if you ever marry a doctor, you'll be sure——"

But Dorothy did not wait for the rest of the sentence. A twitch of her hand had set the bay in motion, and she was half a dozen yards down the street, leaving Mrs. Fowler to ponder over the abruptness of her departure.

Once the town was left behind, the girl lost no time in calling upon her nag's powers, and away he went as readily as if he were fresh from his stable. Mile after mile slipped behind them. Soon the half-way house joined the procession to the rear. It was growing dusk now, and the air was chilly. Her wrists were beginning to ache under the pull of the lines, and the thought came to her that perhaps she stood in greater need than her horse of a breathing-spell. She tried to pull him in on the next rise, but instead of slackening his pace he increased it. In vain she tugged and sawed on the bit; the bay was out of her control, and knew it as well as she did. He was trotting as she had never seen him trot before, with the blood of a dozen generations of picked roadsters coursing hot in his veins. Just ahead she made out the dark mass of wood through which the road passed. An instant

later she was flying along under the tunnel-like arch where the boughs of the trees met above the travelled way. In the gloom of this passage she could make out little of the road, though she leaned from the buggy in the effort to see what might be in her course. Then the wood was left behind, and about her was the twilight of the open country, seeming almost bright by comparison with the tangle of shadows through which she had sped. The bay, untiring, but with flecks of foam showing here and there on his coat, was trotting with the smooth precision of a machine. It was glorious to watch him, to hear the sharp beat of his hoofs. Powerless as she was, the exhilaration of the race took possession of her; she caught herself encouraging the animal with her voice; she forgot the pain in her wrists, the very real danger in which she was placed. She thrilled with delight as she flashed by a wagon whose occupant had prudently driven into the ditch to afford her a clear right of way. He called out a warning to her, but, though she heard his voice, the words were indistinguishable.

At last she was at the summit of the ridge looking down upon the beach, and her destination was close at hand. Again she sawed and tugged at the lines. Slowly her efforts told; gradually the bay's speed decreased, until, as he neared the farm-house, she had him well in hand. Mrs. Weston, one of her boys, Mrs. Clark, and two or three children were awaiting her at the gate, all eager to learn the result of her mission. Dr. Banks and I were close behind them, and, as the horse came to a stop, we pushed our way to the side of the buggy.

"You've made wonderful time," I cried.

"Where's Fowler? Is he following you?" asked Banks.

"He can't be here for six or eight hours," she said, quietly. "But here is a case of instruments."

Banks and I looked at each other, appalled by the news.

"Dr. Fowler is in Trent," the girl went on. "He is expected home at midnight. It is arranged that if you need him then, a message shall be sent to him."

With his sound hand Banks lifted the case from the buggy.

"This is serious, very," he said in my ear. "We can't wait for him: it's out of the question. Join me in your office as quickly as you can."

I nodded, and turned to assist Miss Gray to the ground. Young Weston led the horse away.

"Come," said I to the girl, "you must have some supper. By the looks of the horse, as well as the clock, I can see that you've taken nobody's dust on the road. You must tell me all about it after a while."

"I was in Bassettville hardly forty minutes ago," said she, with a look at her watch. "But how is he? Have you any more hope?"

"He is doing as well as anything human could after such a crushing and mangling, but our opinion is not changed."

She left me, and walked away slowly and dispiritedly. The reaction after the excitement of her ride was already upon her. Almost as depressed in spirit as she, I made my way to the office. Banks had

opened the case, and was inspecting its contents. The room, in expectation of Fowler's arrival, had been prepared for the operation.

"It is fortunate she brought these, Morris," said Banks. "I'm afraid my old tools would have answered poorly. What a head she must have on her shoulders to have thought of borrowing the case! She is a noble woman, Morris, a woman in ten thousand."

"Indeed she is."

"Best get to work at once," Banks added. "Come, are you ready?"

A first capital operation! How the student looks forward to it, how he pictures in imagination the moment when the knife enters the flesh, how he dwells upon the surroundings, the attendants, the bright, keen blades flashing back the light, the odor of the anæsthetic, the subject lying there on the table, maimed, diseased, his life dependent upon the skill of the surgeon's hand and eye! Small wonder the novice's heart throbs with pride in the profession he has chosen; small wonder he thinks it the noblest and best in the choice of man. To cut to cure, to shed blood to save,—to him it seems to represent the highest development of the progress of his race. But when, long afterward, perhaps, this same student, now a general practitioner, finds himself confronted with the ordeal,—ah, that is different. Between these days and those others when he hurried to the hospital amphitheatre stretch years in which his confidence may have waned, his memory of the scene about the operating-table grown dull. There is no cowardly desire upon him to shirk the responsibility,—his professional training would count for little did it not insure him against such weakness,—but he understands the extent of that responsibility. As a student-spectator he watched the work of specialists; now, as an operator, it is his duty to endeavor to approach their skill as nearly as lies in his power, though the knife comes strange and unaccustomed to his hand. Mind you, I am not speaking of the hundreds in every thousand of the profession to whom surgery stands as the best-loved branch of their art, nor yet of those who have achieved unhesitating, unflinching obedience to the mandates of duty, but of those others, among whom I count myself, who find themselves possessed, no matter what their experience, by a reluctance to ply the knife, even while they prepare for the ordeal the necessity of which they realize. Is the feeling rare? It is seldom expressed, it is true, but nevertheless it often exists, none the less poignant for its concealment. I have never conquered it, though I have taken part in many an operation since the one performed in the low-ceiled room of the farm-house.

As Banks had said, the hope of the patient's recovery rested on his sturdy constitution. Since his removal to the house Jones had had several intervals of consciousness, although for the most part he lay in a state of semi-stupor. More than once I caught the word "mistaken" in his rambling talk, when the fog cleared away from his brain, and the memory of Lamar's enigmatic observation flashed upon me; but it was no time to speculate upon the coincidence.

Banks was at the injured man's head, ready to apply the chloroform.

"You'll need an assistant, Morris," said he. "Get somebody who can be depended upon to keep his senses and hand you the right thing when you call for it. Who is available?"

There were two or three wide-eyed faces against the window-panes, but I knew too well how much reliance could be placed upon their owners. Banks understood my hesitation. Stepping to the door, he called out,—

"Miss Gray."

She could not have been far away, for she responded to the summons before I could make protest. Banks tersely told her what was wanted.

"I will do my best," she said. Her voice was steady, but, as she entered the room and came into the glare of the lamps, her face showed pale and drawn.

"It will be a severe test of your nerves," said I. "Don't undertake it if——"

"I am quite ready," she said, quietly but decisively.

"And I'll warrant her nerves," said Banks. "Miss Gray, please hold out your hand. No shaking there, Morris," he added, with a little triumph.

"No, there's too much tension," I thought, but did not put the opinion into words. Banks passed her an apron,—it was an old one of Mrs. Weston's,—and she took the station he pointed out to her and listened attentively to the simple directions he gave.

There is a place for elaborate descriptions of amputations, but, I hold, it is to be found within the covers of technical publications. There is no good reason for setting down here all that we did, from the administering of the chloroform and the applying of the tourniquet to the fastening of the last bandage. The leg was taken off a few inches above the knee; the operation was successful, as the term is. Dorothy Gray did all that was asked of her, and did it well. Only once did she flinch,—that was when a tiny spurt of blood from a severed vessel stained her apron; but, even then, in an instant she was again self-controlled, attentive, ready. From first to last I do not think she glanced once toward the face covered by the handkerchief saturated with chloroform. When our task was done, and Jones had been borne to the bed in an adjoining room which had been prepared for his reception, I turned to find her leaning against the wall, her eyes looking straight before her and the fingers of her clasped hands working spasmodically. She started violently when I touched her arm, and gazed at me as wildly as one roused from an appalling dream.

"Here, here, Miss Gray," said I, "this won't do at all. We can't have you like this. Let me prescribe for you."

"How is he doing?" She pointed to the inner room.

"As well as we could ask. Banks is with him, and will remain as long as he is needed. Do you come with me."

I led the way to the open air, and she followed with the docility of a child.

XV.

The evening breeze had died out, and the night was still and starlit, with a soft coolness unspeakably refreshing after the close air of the office.

"You must make me a promise," I said to the girl. "For the next two hours you must be entirely under my orders. Will you promise?"

"Yes," she answered, mechanically.

"Then, first of all, get a hat and wrap, and rejoin me here as quickly as you can."

Without question she obeyed, returning to find me equipped with pipe and tobacco-pouch and awaiting her. We passed through the gate, and turned into the road leading to the village.

"With your permission I'll light this pipe," I observed.

She nodded absently, though I doubt if she understood a word I had said.

"Tobacco," I resumed, after a pause, in the course of which a pleasant glow had been created in the bowl of the pipe, "is a wonderful agent of comfort. It surprises me sometimes that only one sex hereabouts enjoys its blessings. Both of us have seen or heard of countries where the ladies blow clouds with all the grace imaginable. Why not introduce the fashion here?"

She looked up at the question, but made no reply.

"There was a preceptor of mine," I went on, "who made a study of the effects of nicotine, and who wrote some very able pamphlets on the subject. Among other things, he proved, to his own satisfaction, that even the moderate use of tobacco impaired memory, injured the vision, and caused various other ills. He got to be an extremist at last, putting the weed under a sweeping ban. But all through his life no factory chimney smoked more industriously than he. Finally some of his associates cornered him, and demanded why he didn't follow his own advice.

"I'd be stultifying myself if I did," said he, coolly.

"How?" asked the inquisitors in chorus.

"Isn't it the first duty of a man to obey his physician?"

"Certainly," they admitted. "But you won't let your patients smoke."

"Of course I won't," said he. "It isn't good for 'em. But Jimmy Bangs is my doctor; at least he's called in when anybody's sick at my house."

"Well?" said they.

"So he's my family physician, you see," quoth the specialist; "and he doesn't believe that tobacco ever hurt anybody."

"Come," I persisted, after waiting in vain for her to speak. "What do you think of my old preceptor?"

"I hardly understood the story," she answered, with an effort.

"Well, it's a true tale," said I, "and therefore I'll repeat it."

This time she heard it all.

"Do doctors often reason so logically?" she asked.

"Sometimes they do. Did you know that many specialists die of the diseases they've studied most carefully? 'Physician, heal thyself,'—that's advice they find it difficult to follow."

Again she fell silent.

"For a summer night, this is a good one for star-gazing," I ventured. "Do you keep up your astronomy?"

"I'm afraid not."

"One really should; it's worth the while," said I; but she let the topic drop.

"By the way, Miss Gray, do you think that, in any circumstances, black may appear white?" I asked.

She turned to me with a quick, impatient movement.

"Why do you ask such questions?" she demanded. "How can you speak of trifles, after that—that——" Her voice gave way, and I thought I heard a sob.

"Listen," said I, earnestly. "In 'that' lies the reason for my rambling talk. I hadn't intended to tell you so, but it's the fact. Now you may as well hear it all. When you finished your ride you were worn out. Apparently you hadn't been run away with, but evidently the horse had kept you at work. Then came the call for you to help us. It braced you up, of course, but the strain, coming after the first one, left you a bundle of exposed nerves, so to speak. It wouldn't do to let you go to your room in such a state. Why, you would have had a night of horrors, lying awake for hours, tossing, turning, trying to shake off the nervousness which held you prisoner. If you fell into a doze it would be to wake as suddenly as if under a shock of electricity, to wake to find your muscles rigid and your heart pounding like a hammer. And even when physical weariness overcame you at last, your sleep would be broken by dreams a dozen times more terrible than the experiences you've gone through. I know what you are thinking, and I tell you your thoughts must be turned into another channel. It's to try to turn them that I've brought you out here, that I've gabbled about nothings."

"I understand," she said, softly. "I understand, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart. If I spoke irritably, won't you pardon me? I'm sorry, so sorry, now that I understand."

"There's nothing to pardon, unless it is the brusqueness with which I've blurted out my reasons for getting you away from the house."

"You were not brusque," she said, and we walked on in silence. I could guess how she was striving to dismiss the scenes of the evening from her mind. At last she spoke of her aunt, expressing regret that she had left the invalid to seek her couch unassisted.

"Don't worry," said I. "Mrs. Clark will be only too happy to take your place to-night. Besides, it is probably just as well that Mrs. Loring should not have an immediate opportunity to overwhelm you with questions. That would be bad for both of you. I can't have you sacrificed, even on her altar."

"'Sacrificed'?" she cried. "Dr. Morris, you don't realize what my aunt is to me. She is the best, the kindest woman I have ever known. She has treated me as her daughter,—has loved me more than

many a daughter is loved. A sacrifice! There is nothing I would not gladly do for her."

"I believe you. And my belief is one of the strongest reasons for advising you not to see her to-night. Please remember the promise you gave me."

She halted for an instant, as if in protest that the pledge had been exacted when she did not fully understand its meaning, but she did not offer to turn back. As we strolled on, I gradually drew her into talk, and after a little she seemed to have freed herself from the spell which had been upon her. At the outskirts of the village we turned to the right, and, avoiding the main streets, walked slowly toward the bank of the inlet, up which small coasters occasionally sailed from the bay. From one of the old wooden piers we could make out the shape of a yawl gliding seaward on the ebbing tide. The voices of two men on board the boat came to our ears over the black water, in which glistened the pin-point reflections of the stars.

"I envy those men drifting along so easily," said the girl. "The water always has a fascination for me. Perhaps I would risk even the darkness if we could change places with them."

"No doubt we could get another boat," I suggested.

"I fear it is too late," she answered, with a faint laugh, the first I had heard from her since I watched her start on the ride to Bassettville.

"Confound the clock!" I cried. "It is responsible for half our disappointments."

"Nevertheless, we should get on very poorly without it."

"All prejudice, and inherited prejudice at that."

"Did you ever try to do without one?"

"More than try,—I've had to," said I, with vivid recollection of occasions on which my timepieces, for sufficient reasons, had been committed to another's keeping.

"And were you any happier?"

"At the time? No. But circumstances prevented my giving the possibilities of clockless bliss a fair trial. Hunger, you may have heard, bars the way to minor enjoyments."

"But at least such troubles are all behind you," she said. "I have often thought that a man should be better and stronger for being able to look back upon privations endured and obstacles surmounted."

"That is good doctrine," said I; "but practically—well, I shouldn't care to double my advantages of experience."

"Let us trust there will be no need for you to do so," she said. "But it is really getting late. Shall we not turn back?"

"Miss Gray," said I, breaking one of the pauses in our talk as we walked from the village, "if you are so fond of the water, and if your aunt doesn't object, why shouldn't you have a boat? It could be kept in one of the creeks near the house."

"Capital!" she cried. "How odd that we shouldn't have thought of it before! I should be delighted."

"And your aunt?"

"She will enjoy it as much as I."

"Then you shall have a boat at once," I promised. "I'll arrange for one to-morrow. A man named Johnson has just the little craft to please you, I believe, and I'll have it brought around for inspection."

"You are very good," said she; "but I'll not attempt to thank you in advance."

"Don't try. If you are satisfied with the boat, I shall be more than repaid for any little trouble in getting it."

XVI.

Early the following morning, after satisfying myself that Jones was getting on as well as we had any ground to hope he would, and that he would be carefully looked after by the nurses who had volunteered for the service, I set out for the house on the knoll. It was my plan to seek Johnson after my regular call upon Lamar, but, fate being auspicious, I was saved the trouble, for the fisherman was at work about his employer's premises. He was very willing to let the boat, which, he said, was well adapted for a woman's use, being light and handy, easily rowed, and equipped with a small triangular sail, available in light winds and on smooth water. He would bring it that afternoon to the head of one of the inlets.

"You're on shore most of the time, aren't you?" I asked, when this arrangement had been made.

"Ay, ay, sir," he answered.

"Tired of salt water?"

"No, sir; but a bed that don't pitch and roll is comfortable enough for me, when I've a chance to lie in it."

"What are you doing these days?"

"I'm none too idle," he answered, with a quick glance at me.

"Find him sociable?" I nodded toward the house.

He seemed to be about to speak, but after a look about him he changed his intention, and without a word turned again to the task which my coming had interrupted. Smiling at his caution, I climbed the slope to the door, and entered. Lamar, who was reading, laid down his book—it was his well-worn Cicero's Letters—and bade me good-morning. He seemed to be rather more gracious in mood than usual.

"Well," said I, "that fellow Jones's curiosity is not likely to cause you any annoyance for some time to come. We amputated his right leg last night."

"I supposed it would be necessary," he answered, composedly.

"What? 'Supposed it would be necessary'? What did you know of it?"

"I judged his hurt most serious."

"How did you hear of it?"

"I saw it."

"You saw him run over?"

"Yes."

"You knew that he was lying there helpless for hours?"

"It is true."

"And you did not attempt to relieve him, to go to his assistance?"

"The inference is correct."

His tone was as unconcerned as ever, his speech as deliberate as if he were discussing the most trivial of matters. In spite of my acquaintance with him, I was thunderstruck by this fresh evidence of his callousness. He enjoyed my surprise, I think, as a singer may enjoy the applause of a long hostile critic. It was a tribute of the sort he understood and appreciated. As coolly as if he had been giving directions for a day's errand-going in Trent, he told the story of the accident. Jones, he said, on his way home from the beach tried a short cut which ran near the knoll. Leaving his team in the little hollow where Dorothy Gray afterward found him, he cautiously approached the hummock and climbed to its summit. Turning a corner of the house, he came face to face with Lamar. What talk passed between the two I never learned, but the intruder departed in such haste that his foot slipped on the slope, and he fell. From the way he limped on arising, Lamar believed that his ankle was sprained, but he contrived at last to reach his horses. He had picked up the lines, and was preparing to climb to the wagon-seat, when his injured ankle gave way, and again he fell. At the same moment the horses started. The fore wheel of the loaded vehicle passed over his leg, and before he could get it out of the way—if, indeed, power to move it remained—the hind wheel had completed the work the other had begun. Lamar from an upper window of the house watched what was happening, and, so far as I could determine from his account of it, spent most of his time until the girl appeared gloating over the sight of the helpless man stretched out on the ground at the bottom of the depression. When Dorothy hurried to his house for assistance, he sat within, listening unmoved to her knocks upon his door and her cries for help. Moreover, he prevented old Martha from responding to the summons, when sounds of it penetrated even her dulled hearing. These things he related as calmly as if they had occurred at the other end of the earth, as shamelessly as if there were no sense of pity in him. What my opinion of his conduct might be apparently concerned him not in the least. He sat there telling the tale of his heartlessness, with the cold, dispassionate directness of the man who is his own judge, and who holds himself blameless and beyond the need of excuse or apology.

"He will survive, you say?" he asked, in the same level tone of indifference he had maintained throughout.

"We hope that he will," I answered, striving to keep all trace of feeling out of my voice.

"The odds?"

"Last night they were against him; to-day they are in his favor."

"Ah! He rallies?"

"He has the best of constitutions. In that lies his hope. I may

as well tell you that in his incoherent talk last night I made out the word 'mistaken.' It was repeated several times. Did it have any bearing on his visit here?"

Lamar's face bore the grim smile which, rare as it was, was the limit of his demonstrations of emotion.

"It had a bearing," he said. "The man regarded me as a suspect. He thought me a criminal of this country, in hiding. When we met, he perceived his mistake. That is all."

"And you have no fears that he may cause you trouble?"

"None," he answered. And he picked up his book, to warn me that our discussion had reached its close.

I left him as gladly as one leaves a room the air of which is heavy with poisonous vapors. I was oppressed by him, by his cruelty, by his utter disregard of the sufferings of another. Often had I been on the verge of hatred for him; now I realized that the line had been crossed, that the feeling that I was bound to obey his nod, to come and go at his command, would be more odious than ever. Why had I not the courage to denounce him to his face and to quit his service then and there? Why had I listened cowed and unprotesting? Why, even now, did I not turn back to ease my conscience like an honest man and to cast off the yoke which galled me? In my own heart the answer was only too clear. By degrees Lamar had gained an ascendancy over me, until now, even as I cursed him, I recoiled at the very thought of bearding him, of daring to pit myself against his relentless will. Moreover, I realized that within the last few months a fresh reason for caution had sprung into existence. They say love makes men brave: I know it sometimes makes them cowards.

When I approached the farm-house, still bitterly considering the difficulties which seemed to hedge me about, Mrs. Weston appeared in the door-way.

"I've got a message for you," she called out. "Your bird's flown."

"What? Not Jones? He can't be moved," I cried.

"No, he's here fast enough. Dr. Banks has called, and says he's doin' well; no more fever than to be looked for. But he's got something to do with my news."

"What in the world is it, then?"

"Mis' Loring has gone chasin' off to Trent, takin' Miss Gray with her for luck."

"Gone to Trent?" I repeated. "How is that?"

"Well, she got up this mornin', an' dropped in to see Jones. Somebody told her that his pillows was kinder hot for him. Then there was nothin' but she must go to Trent right off and buy him one of them kind that's got only air in 'em. An' so, off she goes, an' Miss Gray goes too. They'll be home in time for supper. Johnny druv 'em over to Bassettville in the carryall, and he'll wait to bring 'em home."

"Oh, the outing will do Mrs. Loring no harm," said I, moving toward the office.

"But that ain't the message," said Mrs. Weston. "That's saved

for the last, like a Thanksgiving' mince-pie. It's from Miss Gray, and it's about a boat."

"Yes. She was to look at one this afternoon."

"Well, bein' as she's in Trent, she can't keep the appointment. So she asked me to tell you to hire the boat anyhow; if it suited you, it'd suit her."

Thus it happened that when Johnson navigated his craft to the head of the inlet I was prepared to bind the bargain with him.

"It may be," I told him, "that the ladies would feel safer if they had a man with them when they ventured out on the bay. In that case, could you help them out?"

"I guess I could," said he, after a moment's reflection. "Most generally I'm off watch the best part of the day."

"Off watch" set me to thinking, though I very well knew to what he referred.

"By the way, Johnson," said I, with an effort at carelessness, "I understand you look out for Mr. Lamar's mail."

"Well, you might say so," he answered, cautiously.

"I imagine his correspondence is light," said I, following up the advantage scored by the chance shot.

He nodded assent.

"Writes to New York, as a rule," I suggested.

"That's about it."

"But his answers are slow in coming."

"Two months, sometimes," said Johnson. "Look here, Doc," he added, quickly, "I know you're thick with him, or I wouldn't have said that much. It don't go no further, do it?"

"I give you my word on that," said I, adding, rather disingenuously, "I wouldn't have asked you anything you were not free to tell me."

"That's what I thought," he said, with a look of relief on his honest face. "Gab's a poor trade,—leastways, for a man."

"Right you are," said I, and with this bit of wisdom we dropped the subject. However, I had learned enough for a basis for a little calculation. Lamar was communicating with friends at home, through the kindly offices of somebody in New York. His correspondents forwarded their replies through the same channel of the New-Yorker and the fisherman. No doubt they sent him information bearing on the energy with which his enemies were pursuing him. Very possibly they had means of their own for getting an inkling of their adversaries' doings. It could be set down as certain that they furnished the money which Lamar spent, on occasion, with a liberal hand. After all, though, this theorizing was groping in the dark: It furnished no clue to the man's mystery; it assuredly gave me no cause to hate him the less or to trust in the stability of my tenure of office in his service. I merely had proof now, as I had suspected, that he did not depend entirely upon me in any of his dealings with the rest of the world. He evidently believed in checks and safeguards; and through Johnson he had secured a check upon me.

XVII.

Mrs. Loring returned from Trent in the best of spirits. The day's jaunt had done her good. I have no doubt that it served to satisfy for a time the craving for gadding about which possessed her now and then, for all her repeated praises of a quiet home life. Moreover, she brought with her a friend, whose presence could hardly but add to her peace of mind; for she dearly loved to play the hostess, the more, perhaps, because her opportunities for assuming the rôle had been so limited. As it happened, I had only a glimpse of this visitor. Dr. Banks had sent me an urgent message to hasten to one of his patients, and I was driving briskly toward the sick man's residence when I met the carryall, homeward bound from Bassettville. Mrs. Loring and her niece were stowed away under a multitude of bundles in the stern of the old ark on wheels, while the forecastle was shared by the youthful John and a stranger, of whom I could make out little, except that he was a dark, bearded man, clad in fashionable raiment. At the time, I supposed him to be some stray traveller bound for the village and profiting by the happy accident of the carryall voyaging in that direction.

The evening was far advanced when I returned to Mrs. Weston's, and, although that lady enlightened me as to the arrival of Mrs. Loring and her guest, I was quite willing to avoid intruding upon them. Mrs. Weston could tell very little about the new-comer. She thought that he was a foreigner, with one of those outlandish names that nobody but an alien could understand. It was easy to conjecture that Mrs. Loring had chanced to meet him in Trent, and had insisted upon bringing him to Rodneytown, to talk over old times and to gossip about people they had known in the Lord knew what distant land. In the morning, no doubt, an opportunity would be given me to pay my respects.

But the morning brought no opportunity of the sort. When I called upon Mrs. Loring she was alone, and her guest—Colonel Mendoza she called him—was out for a ramble about the neighborhood. He had expressed a desire to visit the beach, she explained, and, inasmuch as he had taken Johnson's boat, was probably cruising about the bay or some of the many channels branching off from it. She expected him to return in an hour or two, and she was anxious, so very anxious, that I should meet him. Couldn't I arrange to dine with them? Really it was distressing that another visit to Banks's patient would prevent an acceptance of the invitation. The colonel was such a charming gentleman, so very, very charming, so courteous, so erudite, so widely travelled, and so on through the list of applicable adjectives. However, that afternoon or evening, or at supper,—yes, that would be a capital time,—the meeting could be brought about. Of course I acquiesced, and then, as Miss Gray was not in sight, parted with her aunt rather abruptly. After a quarter of an hour with Jones, whose case showed no unfavorable symptoms, came the call upon Lamar. Contrary to his custom, he was pottering about his domain that morning, lured from the house, perhaps, by the beauty of the day, which, how-

ever, was not potent enough to change his manner, for he gave me his stereotyped greeting, and our talk was as brief and formal as usual. He asked no questions as to the progress the injured man was making, and I volunteered no information on the subject. Then, in turn, came the ride on Banks's business. I returned from it early in the afternoon, and after a hasty meal—I challenge any man to linger unnecessarily over a country dinner gone cold for a couple of hours—I spied Miss Gray on the porch of Mrs. Clark's residence, and strolled in her direction.

"I've come to make a call," said I, taking a seat beside her.

"How flattering to us!" she answered, with a smile. "I'll bear the news to my aunt at once."

"Oh, there's no hurry. Let me catch my breath. I'm here to see your visitor this time."

"But don't you know that he has gone?" she asked.

"No. I supposed him good for two or three days at least. Certainly Mrs. Loring didn't expect him to bid good-by so speedily. He must be a genuine bird of passage."

"He surprised us. Really, we saw very little of him; for he started out early this morning and didn't return until nearly noon. And then he was off to Trent without waiting for dinner. He explained that he had recollected an important engagement, which must have escaped his memory when, carried away by the pleasure of meeting my aunt, he accepted her invitation."

"That's odd," said I, idly, a good deal relieved, on the whole, to find that I need not meet the stranger, who, no matter how agreeable he might have been, would have lessened my chances for a chat with Dorothy. "Come, let us solace ourselves for his flight by a cruise in your boat. You'll be comfortable in the shade of a parasol."

She readily agreed to the plan, and in ten minutes we were standing on the bank above the skiff, looking down at it with a pretence at critical inspection.

"It is surprising that Johnson delivered the boat with so much mud on the seats," said I. "Let me brush it off before you try to embark. I'm amazed at his carelessness."

"Perhaps the fault is Colonel Mendoza's," she observed. "He used the boat this morning, you know."

"Most of the muss is out of the way now," said I, assisting her into the stern sheets and settling myself at the oars, "but I'll speak to Johnson about it, anyway. One expects more neatness in an old man-of-war's-man."

"The colonel is far more likely to be the guilty person," she objected, as I bent to the oars and the boat gathered headway.

"Who is he? Is he a mystery or a plain every-day body? Tell me about him."

"We met him in Nice, and afterward in Paris. He was very courteous, and aunt and he became very good friends. He never told us much about himself, but it was by his advice that we made the trip to Rio, and through letters he gave us our stay was made delightful, although the climate failed to help my aunt."

"He was not with you in Brazil?"

"No. His home was there, and we heard a good deal of his plantations, but he spent most of his time in Europe. We met him afterward at Baden, but failed to see much of him, for business of some sort called him away a few days later."

It was difficult to imagine that the gentleman in question, in his intimacy with my friends, had been entirely actuated by regard for an elderly person half mad about her health. I felt something akin to a pang of jealousy, though I tried to conceal my interest as I asked,—

"Trent was a curious place to run across such an admirer of trans-Atlantic civilization, was it not?"

"Our meeting was purely accidental. We were lunching in the restaurant of one of the hotels when he came in and took the table next to ours. We hardly recognized him at first; he had aged much since we saw him last. We were delighted at the meeting, and I think it pleased him as well. He told us that he had been travelling extensively in this country, but evidently he had not enjoyed the life here. In fact, aunt and he fell into a discussion of the manners and customs of the good people of the United States. You should have heard her: she is patriotic to the core. She told him that he had had no opportunity to learn how the people really lived; and then she insisted that he should come here, for a few days at least, to get just the experience in which he was lacking. He accepted the invitation, after a little hesitation. Honestly, I think he was glad to escape the hotels for a while. Last evening he and aunt talked for hours about their travels, about this place and its people. She told him how she was gaining under your care, and how fortunate she was in securing such skilful attendance in the country. Perhaps it is as well that you didn't hear her. Flattery is disastrous sometimes, isn't it?"

"You should know better than I."

She laughed lightly.

"Nothing but good was said of you," she went on. "Aunt dwelt upon your success with her, and your regular attendance upon the old man who lives over there." She pointed to the knoll, with which we were almost abreast, being distant from it hardly a hundred yards. "She told him what a hermit existence Mr.—Mr. Lamar—that is the name, isn't it?—seems to prefer."

"Was he interested?"

"Shall I tell you the plain truth? It may spoil the story."

"The truth always," said I.

"At first he was interested, but very soon he delicately managed to change the subject."

"I don't blame him," I muttered, with a glance at the house showing above the scrubby trees. Her glance followed mine.

"Dr. Morris," she asked, after a pause, "is that Mr. Lamar deaf? When I tried to rouse somebody in his house the other day, the place was as unresponsive as a tomb."

"The comparison is excellent," said I, avoiding a direct answer to her query, as most men with an aversion to unnecessary falsehoods

would have avoided it. "The servant is deaf, and her master is sometimes so self-absorbed that he is even worse off than she."

"What a wretched existence! Is his health altogether gone?"

"He is more comfortable now than when he came here."

I knew that she was studying my face, but I kept my eyes averted.

"It is strange that in this gossip-loving village so little is known of him," she went on. "One hears that he is a retired brewer from the South; but that seems to be the limit of knowledge of his antecedents."

"It is the accepted version," said I. "Really, I know little of his history before he retained me."

Our craft was nearing the mouth of the tidal stream, and a few more vigorous strokes shot it out upon the smooth waters of the bay, hardly rippled by the gentle breeze. To the north were two sloops crawling along on their way to the village. To the south and east curved the long tongue of land which formed the boundary of the bay on two sides and sheltered it from the ocean swell. Not more than half a mile from where we were, a catboat lay at anchor, with a solitary figure lolling over her side. The whole scene was full of the restfulness of the summer afternoon, and the spell of it stole upon us, as if we left behind with the land its anxieties, sorrows, and fears. For a time the boat drifted on, propelled more by a current of the bay than by the occasional strokes of the oar. The girl was half reclining, trailing one of her hands in the water and with the other toying with the handle of her parasol, the shaft of which rested on her shoulder. We were both day-dreaming, when a hail came to rouse us from our reveries. Looking up, I found that we were close to the anchored craft, and that Johnson, its occupant, had given us warning none too soon. In a moment we were alongside the catboat, and his hand had caught the gunwale of the skiff.

"Halloo, Johnson!" said I: "what sort of fishing are you doing here? Business or fun?"

"Fun mostly, sir," he answered, pointing to a hand-line hanging over the side. "Nothing of a bigness to be caught here. How does the lady like the boat?"

"Very much indeed," said Miss Gray.

"You'll find she works easy, ma'am," said he.

"We discovered a lot of dried mud on the thwarts," said I. "You can see some of it yet."

"The boat was as clean as a whistle yesterday. Somebody must have been out in her 'tween then and now."

"I believe she was in use this morning," I admitted.

"Well, whoever it was," Johnson declared, after a survey of the skiff, "he must have landed somewhere on the flats, where there was mud, and tracked it in when he came aboard ag'in. Here's another of his marks." And he sent a long arm into the bow of our little vessel and picked up the stump of a cigarette from the planking. As he held it out for our inspection, the paper unrolled, showing the dark grains of the tobacco.

"I've seen that sorter cigarette before, Doc, and I guess you have, too, but not round these parts," he said. "Dagoes fancy 'em."

"And you don't, eh? Well, I'm of your way of thinking, but the gentleman who was out in the boat this morning wasn't. Come up to the house to-morrow, will you, and give Miss Gray a sailing-lesson."

"Ay, ay, sir," said Johnson. "The boat's very clever under sail. I'll be glad to show her any little p'int's she needs to pick up."

"Your colonel can't be called a very tidy mariner, no matter what his other virtues may be," said I, as we re-entered the inlet.

"Why do you call him my colonel?" the girl asked, and it seemed to me that I detected a slight increase in her color. "He is a friend of my aunt's, hardly of mine, though I've always found him very agreeable."

"And attentive?" I hazarded, under the spur of revived jealousy.

"Scarcely that," she said, quietly, "though he was always most kind to me."

The spur went deeper.

"Oh, of course," said I, rashly; "and he must have had such delightful opportunities."

"He is a charming man," she answered, with a smile which filled me with misery. I dare say she read me easily, and was quite prepared to prolong the teasing had the chance been given her. But, looking over my shoulder, my glance fell upon Lamar's sombre abode. The sight of it made me silent, and, sullenly settling down to the oars, I sent the light craft swiftly on toward its mooring-place.

XVIII.

It is possible that men exist who, in the period succeeding the discovery that they have undergone the mental metamorphosis commonly styled falling in love, and preceding the critical moment when the object of adoration confesses her sentiments of reciprocity or declares the wooing to have been in vain, maintain their clearness of understanding, their evenness of temper, and their soundness of judgment. It is conceivable, I admit, that such men live; but it has never been my lot to enjoy the privilege of acquaintance with one of them. I do not mean that when love flies in at the window common sense rushes out at the door; but I do hold that the new-comer is prone to exert, throughout that period of storm and stress, a semi-paralyzing influence over the old tenant, making him sadly untrustworthy at times when the demands upon him are greatest. Therefore I regard myself as no exception to the general rule—general, that is, so far as my observation goes—in having followed irrational courses and behaved erratically during three weeks or more of dissatisfaction, uncertainty, and doubt. For one of them I made myself miserable through jealousy of the man Dorothy's aunt had been pleased to make her guest. Without a shadow of proof to support the fabric of speculation I laboriously built up, I contrived to persuade myself that he was a

rival, favored, of course, for his wealth and position. Even from his hasty departure I gained little comfort. The bugaboo, once installed, was not to be overthrown by such a trifle. Full of gloomy forebodings, I waited for news that he would return, plotting, in my more cheerful intervals, wild schemes for turning his triumphant reappearance into a by-word and a mockery. Once I caught myself reading with vast approval summaries of famous cases in a text-book on toxicology. The volume had been picked up hap-hazard, but its terse account of several noted matters caught my fancy, and I read on until some noise about the house, interrupting my recreation, brought me to a realization of the ridiculousness of the performance,—for there were still moments when I could understand that I was playing the fool. Perhaps, also, the plea might be entered that at this time I was a victim of a recurrence of my old perplexities, recent events having served again to force them upon me with even greater vividness than before.

The jealous fit was ended by a letter which the late visitor sent from New York to Mrs. Loring. In it he expressed deep regret that circumstances would prevent him from completing his visit. Business, he explained, called him abroad, and before the missive reached her he would be well on his way to Liverpool. I heard the news with a decent effort at an appearance of regret, and from that moment had a more friendly impression regarding the gallant colonel.

It had been my intention to speak of him to Lamar, rather because of his Brazilian interests, of which my client might know something, than because of his morning cruise about the channels of the marsh or the abrupt termination of his stay. Mrs. Loring's account of the colonel's manner of life indicated that he was a chronic tourist, with no very active concern in happenings in his own country, so long as they did not interfere with his sources of revenue. One thing after another, however, occurred to prevent a mention of him. One day Lamar was busy with his experiments; the next, for some reason of his own, he cut short our talk; the next he was back in his laboratory. Thus, before an opportunity was offered to tell my bit of news, its value appeared to have been lost through staleness, and, in the end, fresher topics took its place when Lamar showed a willingness to indulge in a brief gossip. So it happened that he heard nothing of the incident which had caused me so many hours of unnecessary perturbation.

Jones, meanwhile, had been making steady progress, and, while Banks and I saw him daily, there was little need of our attendance. We learned that he would leave the neighborhood as soon as his removal could be attempted with safety, but he told us nothing further of his plans. I tried occasionally to lead him to speak of his reasons for coming to Rodneytown, but he was reticent, and I had to be content with the explanation given by Lamar. Dorothy Gray came often to read to him, and he manifested much gratitude for her kindness; but even to her he would say next to nothing of his history or his projects.

Banks's wrist was still weak, but his recovery from the sprain had gone far enough to enable him to circulate in his old fashion among his patients, and my duties as his coadjutor were ended. He was begin-

ning, though, to renew his discourses about his desire to secure a partner and practically to retire, and it was clear that he would soon make me a direct offer. It was only fair that I should prepare to give a definite answer, but I realized that my plans were even more unsettled than ever. There was a new disturbing element in the situation. Could I but foretell what Dorothy would answer were a certain question put to her, then Dr. Banks might be answered, in turn, so soon as he chose to speak. But what would the young lady say?

Yes, what would she say? Truly I was far from sanguine. I could find no reason for confidence, in spite of many soulful efforts to discover one. We were the best of friends; we were together daily, sometimes for hours at a time; we read together, walked together, and drove together. We had interests in common; in some lines of thought our beliefs were akin. Such things were well enough in their way, but what ground for hope did they furnish? Would not a blush, a sigh, have far more meaning? Frequently I had read dissertations on the symptoms of the love-malady, but surely nowhere had I noted good-fellowship set forth as a distinguishing mark of passion. Then, too, there was the difficulty of the bread-and-butter problem. What business had I to contemplate matrimony, with no well-defined idea how even one mouth was to be filled, in the event of a break with the man who would remain my paymaster no longer than suited his convenience? My savings would cut but a poor figure as a war-chest for a family campaign. Besides, the girl was supposedly well-to-do, and certainly was the heiress of her aunt, whose wealth appeared to be sufficient to enable her to travel wherever she desired, and to pay the bills of high-priced specialists, who charged with an appreciation of the fact that their patients would need to take nothing with them out of this world. It would not be pleasing to be classed as a fortune-hunter. All the philosophy available would not remove the sting from that reproach.

Meditating these things, I fell into habits entirely reprehensible from the stand-point of every-day sanity. I sat up late o' nights, I smoked more strong tobacco than was for my good, I took to moping and violent language. On the whole, it was fortunate that my practice was limited,—fortunate both for me and for my supposititious patients. Whether anybody guessed the character of my thoughts, or fathomed my moods, was a matter almost of indifference. I told myself that the mask should always be worn in the presence of Mrs. Loring and her niece; as for the others, their opinion did not count. As a matter of fact, I imagine that my secret was known to all the women thereabouts, and perhaps to some of the men. Banks now and then cracked jokes at my expense of a character which gave ground to believe that he had made a shrewd diagnosis of my malady. But, when all is said and done, the simple truth is that I was as nearly at my wits' end, even with the ghost of the colonel's rivalry exorcised, as probably half the adult males of the nation would own themselves to have been on various occasions, would they but make confession.

Mrs. Loring was unquestionably the better for her life in the country. She still kept herself under the discipline of an invalid,

though the precaution was entirely unnecessary. Her appetite was excellent, her nerves were almost forgotten, the daily record of her symptoms was limited to an entry of a few lines, in place of the pages she had covered at first. She often failed to remember that I was her physician, and suffered me to depart without hearing a word bearing on her long-cherished aches and agonies. She had become acquainted with everybody in the village; nobody knew better than she the true inwardness of every piece of mild scandal retailed from one end of it to the other. She was hand in glove with the ringleaders in its social diversions, and was the moving spirit in an enterprise which promised to eclipse anything of the sort ever attempted in Rodneytown. This was no less than a "Fête Internationale," as the programmes had it, in which youths and maidens of many lands were to be personated by the young people of the village. There were to be tableaux, recitations, music, and dancing, and altogether a somewhat ambitious list of divertissements. Mrs. Loring had assumed the responsibility of designing the costumes, a duty which she was well fitted to perform, for she was blessed with a keen eye for color effects, and her travels had made her a trustworthy source of information regarding the details of the pictures it was proposed to present. There was no suggestion of invalidism in her as she bustled about on her congenial tasks; the busier she was, the greater her content. The *fête* was to her a mental and physical tonic, more beneficial than any possible combination of chemicals. This I realized, but, with the perverse pessimism brought about by my season of unrest, I feared that it would result in opening her eyes to the truth that she needed no physician. And when that discovery was made, how long would she and her niece tarry in that quiet neighborhood?

The weather about this time took a turn for the worse; for forty-eight hours a dense fog hung over the coast. It thinned somewhat by the third morning. The banks of mist were drifting seaward when I plodded across the plain to the house on the knoll. Lamar, who was awaiting me in the living-room, appeared to be giving himself up to idleness; for there were no books on the table at which he sat, and he seemed to be unusually willing to engage in desultory chat. After a little, he told me that he had been feeling far from well for some weeks, and that the depressing weather had aggravated his trouble.

To a stranger he would have looked a sick man, but perhaps association had blunted my perceptions in his case, and his words surprised me. Assuredly he was no weaker than on the night when he first came to me. If there had been any change, it had been an improvement. The old air of the fugitive had in great part disappeared, though he still gave one the impression of continual vigilance.

He described his symptoms with his habitual deliberateness, closing the account with a statement that he believed his heart to be affected seriously, and that he desired me to examine him at once.

"I am afraid that you are correct in your diagnosis," said I, when the task had been accomplished. "There is cardiac trouble. It is far advanced."

"Its character?"

"Valvular. I should like a consultation at once."

"Of what advantage?" he asked, as coolly as if he were not discussing his own death-sentence. "The disease is mortal. Treatment cannot cure it."

"But it may prolong life," I urged. "Besides, it is only fairness to yourself to have an expert's opinion. Take my advice——"

"Pardon, but I must decline to do so. I am content with your skill unaided. It is a confirmation of my own suspicion. The end is not so much; I have the warning,—it is all I desire."

He was silent for a little, this strange being, his expression unchanged, his self-control absolute. When at last he spoke, there was no hint of emotion in his voice as he asked the question I dreaded to hear.

"How long may I, in reason, count upon?"

"I cannot tell you definitely," I answered. "It may be a year, two years, three years; it may be to-morrow. A shock, a——"

"I comprehend. But, undisturbed, what time do the odds favor?"

"Six months. But it is no more than the wildest guess-work."

Again there was a pause. Presently he asked,—

"You spoke of a shock. Would it be of necessity fatal?"

"No. But it would be the one chance in ten if it were not." I knew my man well enough to understand that he desired no evasions.

"You speak from the book," he said, quietly; "but in that I think you wrong. I rate the chance greater."

"May you be in the right of it," I said; but he made no comment upon the hope thus expressed. Soon after, having given a few directions for his care of himself, and having promised to have a prescription for him made up at once, I left him to his thoughts. What they were I could hardly imagine, but I hoped that among them was some shadow of remorse at the remembrance of the poor devil whom he had suffered to lie helpless for hours almost at his door. It was fate's irony that of these two men the one who then was close to death should now be far on the road to health, with the prospect of many years before him, while the other, who had rejoiced in his misfortune, should find himself under a sentence which knew no chance of reprieve.

XIX.

After the dampness and fog came a week of almost tropical heat, under which the fields grew parched and dull-hued and the dust lay deep on the highways. The breeze, when it blew, was from the land, but much of the time there was a calm, even more oppressive than the heat-laden zephyrs. Against such conditions the energies of but one of us were proof. Mrs. Loring alone defied the heat and glare and dust, going on with her preparations for the *fête* with undiminished energy, amidst the wondering comments of the rest, to whom all unnecessary exertion had become a thing to be abhorred.

"Goodness gracious! how she do keep goin' so beats me," Mrs.

Weston confided to me one afternoon, when she had sought the comparative coolness the office offered.

"She seems to thrive on high temperatures," said I. "She's a human salamander."

"Well, let that be as it may," said Mrs. Weston, who was not to be entrapped into a definite statement on such a doubtful point, "she's a marvel, I must say. 'Tain't like, now, as if she had to work for a livin'. But that's jes' the way the world seems to go. Them that don't need gets; them that wants to rest has to keep stirrin'. If 'twas her niece was rushin' round, 'twould be all natural, because she's got her livin' to get sooner 'r later. If I was in her place, I'd be plannin' and savin' like a good fellow."

"Why should she?" I demanded. "Her aunt must be at least well-to-do, and she's nearer to her than anybody else."

"Oh, come now, don't you know about Mis' Loring's money?"

"No. Honestly, so far as I know, she is quite able to provide for her niece. What do you mean?"

Mrs. Weston's face shone with the joy of telling a story new to her hearer.

"Oh, it come straight to me," said she. "Mis' Loring told Mis' Clark, and I got it right from her. Mis' Loring's husband left her jes' a life interest in his estate, and when she dies it all goes back to his folks. She gets the interest every year, but she can't touch the principal. So Miss Gray can't get anything from her, though of course she pays her bills now."

"Perhaps Miss Gray has an income of her own," I suggested.

"Mis' Loring says not. Her pa was kinder shif'less, and didn't leave her nothing. Mis' Loring's taken care of her ever since she was a little girl."

I sat deep in thought long after Mrs. Weston had gone back to her household duties. Did her news please me? So far as the girl was concerned, I was heartily sorry to learn that her prospects were so uncertain; so far as the tidings affected me, I rejoiced. I was free to press my suit, to ask her hand, undeterred by the dread of a misconception of my motives. At least one of the obstacles had been removed from my path.

When meditation had become a weariness,—and when one is in love it requires a vast amount of brain-racking to produce this result,—I picked up my hat and left the house, greatly influenced by the hope that Miss Gray might be tenanted some shaded nook in the neighborhood. Somewhat to my surprise, she was walking slowly down the road.

"We're going boating," she explained, when I overtook her. "It is so oppressively hot on shore that both aunt and I decided that it could be no worse on the water. Then, too, there is a chance that we may find some breeze stirring on the bay. Will you not join us?"

"With pleasure," said I. "But how does Mrs. Loring contrive to spare the time? She is supposed to be busy, day and night, with the arrangements for the *fête*, you know."

"So she is," said the girl, with a smile, "but when I proposed that

she should take a vacation for a few hours she saw the wisdom of the idea. She will follow us to the boat in a few minutes. Really, I think it was the allurements of a little trip on the water which won her over to leaving her designs and programmes. She is devoted to boating, you know; it is surprising that she has resisted the temptation so often lately. She has been out with me hardly half a dozen times; and Mr. Johnson has had but one pupil at his sailing-lessons."

"And how have you improved them?"

"My teacher is flattering. But perhaps I may be able to display my skill in a practical way, if only we get a breeze this afternoon."

"Count on me to be a severe critic," said I. "By the way, Miss Gray, do you mind if I combine business with pleasure? I have an errand to do at Mr. Lamar's, and if you would land me near his house, and then pick me up again, I should be your debtor forever."

She fell in with this plan, and I turned back to the house to secure a volume which Lamar had asked me to lend him. It was a small text-book on histology, I remember, though why he should have desired to get a smattering of that branch I never learned. When I reached the boat Mrs. Loring was enthroned in the stern sheets, while her niece was perched on the narrow seat in the bow. The air was stiflingly hot on the sheltered waters of the creek, and the sweat gathered on my face as I busied myself with the oars.

"Ugh! this is like the flue of a furnace," I protested, ceasing rowing for a moment to wipe my forehead. "I envy you ladies your parasols and cool attire."

"Ah, but woman's dress is so illogical, you know, so contrary to the dictates of sense and science," said Miss Gray, a little maliciously. To tell the truth, I think she was quoting a remark of mine with reasonable accuracy.

"Do you believe that?" I asked, rather feebly, glancing at her over my shoulder. She wore a gown of some light thin fabric, and, with the art possessed by many of her sex, looked daintily comfortable in spite of the outrageous temperature.

"Of course she doesn't," Mrs. Loring broke in. "If any girl says such a thing, it is because the fashion is not becoming to her."

A remark so direct, so unqualified, and so free from repetitions was a novelty. It centred my attention on the speaker, who, I now noted, was dressed almost as seasonably as her niece, although she favored darker colors.

"No man's opinion seems to be weighty enough to count," said I, "especially as the kickers would, no doubt, be the first to protest if their objections were heeded and led to rational dress."

"Oh, really, I don't know," said Mrs. Loring, rising to the opportunity. "Some men are so persuasive, so delightfully persuasive, doctor, they can convince you, or make you think you're convinced, —which is almost the same thing, don't you know? And so many of your profession, doctor, —when I think how great my acquaintance with them has been, it appalls me, it really appalls me, —argue so beautifully, but so differently, doctor, so differently. And very likely it would be the same thing, the very same thing with them, if they had

to devise a national costume which should be healthy and hygienic and all the other things it should be—and they say it isn't now, doctor. Now, I like, yes, really, I must say, I like variety. You can't imagine how pretty, how very pretty some of the girls will look in their *fête* dresses, as peasants, don't you know, doctor, and all sorts of picturesque people. It seems a pity, such a pity, that they can't wear them all the time; though how the poor things would manage in winter—no, I'm afraid the short skirts wouldn't do: do you think they would, doctor? Or in church,—how would they look in church? No, no, they wouldn't do in church, they really wouldn't; not exactly sacrilegious, don't you know, but inappropriate,—yes, that's just the word, inappropriate. But for six days in the week, doctor, for six days in the week, think how romantic, how very romantic, they would be. That is, in warm weather, of course,—in warm weather, you understand."

"You are right, I dare say," I admitted. "We are looking forward to a great treat. But, if you will pardon a personal comment, I'll repeat that you two ladies fill me with envy."

"How nice of you to say so, doctor, how very nice indeed! But then you physicians have an art, such an art, of saying delightful things. You have such practice, you know, such wonderful practice, soothing the sick, doctor, and comforting the dying——"

"Aunt," Miss Gray broke in with some haste, "please do not talk about—about—dress any more on such a terribly warm day. It excites you too greatly."

"If I'm to attend to my errand now," I added, "it might be well to put me ashore. I shall not be gone long; probably not more than ten minutes. Where shall I rejoin you?"

We were abreast of the knoll, and not very far from it. I ran the boat to the bank and stepped upon it, Miss Gray taking my place at the oars.

"How will it do," she suggested, "for us to row down to the bay, and then coast along until we come to that other inlet, which runs so close to Mr. Lamar's house? We can run up it, and take you on board very conveniently."

"Excellent," said I. "You'll find me a little distance landward from the house. There's some air stirring over the bay now, and you may meet a real breeze on the open water. It will be a pleasant change."

"Then we can spread the sail," said Mrs. Loring. "Do you know, doctor, I adore sailing, I really adore it."

Her niece bent to the oars, and the light craft glided on its voyage. While I climbed the side of the knoll I could see the boat enter the bay. A moment later the girl had ceased rowing, and had shipped the slender spar which did duty as a mast. There appeared to be just breeze enough to fill the tiny sail.

Lamar met me at his door.

"Here's that book you wanted," said I. "There was an opportunity to deliver it this afternoon, and I improved it. Anything else you would like to have done?"

"Nothing, I thank you," he answered, turning back into the house.

The direful news he had received so recently had had no softening effect upon him. He showed no longing for sympathy, no desire to seek from his physician a word of encouragement.

Johnson was at work near by, and I stopped to chat with him, while I watched the boat move slowly northward and turn at last into the inlet. Miss Gray, sitting on the midship thwart, was managing the sail, while Mrs. Loring, at her old post, held the steering-lines. She was leaning over the side, I noticed, catching at bits of drift-wood floating in the current.

"It's a ladies' breeze, Johnson," said I, "barely enough to give the boat steerage-way."

"Ain't much of it," he answered, "and what little strength there's in it comes in puffs. D'you notice 'em?"

"Yes, but they're baby puffs; no weight in them."

"Not much, sir, that's true," said he, going back to his task.

I took my time in reaching the spot, about a hundred yards from the house, where the boat was to touch; but so slow had been its movement that when I looked back it was yet opposite the knoll. Mrs. Loring was amusing herself as before, while Miss Gray was exchanging friendly nods with the fisherman. On the water just astern of the craft was a dark line, advancing rapidly toward it and marking the coming of a gust a little stronger than any of its predecessors. A few seconds later the sail filled with the breeze, and the boat keeled sharply, just as Mrs. Loring made an unusually reckless grasp at the drift-wood. I saw her, under the combined impetus, lose her balance and pitch headlong over the side, struggle wildly in the water, and then disappear beneath the surface.

I ran at top speed toward the knoll, but long before I climbed its slope Johnson had leaped into the stream. He had some little distance to swim, however, and, though once the drowning woman's dress showed above the water, she had sunk again before he could reach her. He dived, but missed her. Dorothy, with rare presence of mind, had lost no time in bringing the boat about, and when Johnson rose to the surface the little craft was close to hand. Climbing into it, he stood for a few seconds searching the water for a glimpse of the unfortunate woman, and then dived again. When I reached the rocks above him, he reappeared for the second time, and I saw that he had been successful, at least in finding the body. He was a powerful swimmer, and almost as soon as I could clamber down the ledges he had brought his burden to the base of the lowest of them. Between us we had little difficulty in raising her from the water and bearing her to the level ground on the top of the knoll. Close behind us was the girl, aiding us when she could in our sorrowful task. I knew what that moment meant to her, and was amazed at her self-control, notwithstanding the evidences she had given of her ability to maintain it in emergencies. There was little likelihood, though, that it could avail aught in the present instance.

Johnson's life along shore had familiarized him with such cases, and I had seen several in which resuscitation had been attempted, but neither of us had anything in his experience to warrant much hope for Mrs.

Loring, in spite of the brief time she had been in the water. Nevertheless, we labored over her long after we realized that our efforts were in vain. With that pale-faced girl struggling with the agony which possessed her, yet working with us unremittingly, it was a harder task to cease than to continue our endeavors. Lamar approached us once, but, after a glance at the scene, turned away without a word and re-entered the house. A moment later, however, old Martha appeared, bearing stimulants, which she placed beside me, and then stood watching us with awe-stricken curiosity.

At last Johnson rose.

"It's no use, doctor, no use," he said, solemnly. "The poor lady's gone."

The girl gave a despairing cry. Some time before she must have begun to realize the truth, but she had battled against it, striving to deceive herself.

"No, no, it can't be, it can't be!" she moaned. "Oh, aunt, aunt! Gone, gone from me, forever!"

She reeled, and would have fallen, but I caught her in my arms, and held her close as she sobbed upon my breast, crying her heart out, it seemed, as the sense of her great loss burst upon her.

XX.

Poor Mrs. Loring was laid to rest in the village burying-ground, sincerely mourned by the new friends among whom her life had ended. Her foibles were forgotten, and only her courtesy, her kindness, her generosity, were remembered. She had done little of harm and something of good in the world,—a better record than can be placed to the credit of many whose pretensions have far exceeded those of this victim of a morbidness of imagination approaching hypochondria.

Week after week passed, but Dorothy Gray was still in Rodneytown, reluctant to quit the kindly circle whose members had shown heart-felt sympathy in her affliction. I doubt whether she had been able to decide whither to go in case she left the village. She had no near relations, certainly none to whom she would turn at such a time. In her years of wandering with her aunt she had made few intimate friends. In short, she was left without any one from whom she might naturally seek consolation and counsel. The good women of the neighborhood did their best to take the place of kinsfolk and old friends; they wept with her in the days when her bereavement had just come upon her, and afterward, when the first bitterness of her loss was past, they kept her company and strove to cheer her, after the homely fashion of their kind. And so it happened that she remained with us, bearing her sorrow as best she could.

Not long after the death of her aunt I had confirmation of the story Mrs. Weston had brought me. The trustee of the estate, the income of which Mrs. Loring had received, came to Rodneytown to attend the funeral services. He was a lawyer, cautious and reserved in

manner, and supposedly as free from sentimentality as the desk in his office. Yet under the professional mask there was, after all, something of the emotional man, which asserted itself in a practical way, befitting the weaknesses of an eminently practical man.

"Dr. Morris," said he, on the eve of his departure, "there is a result of this recent tragic occurrence to which your attention may not have been called. Mrs. Loring had only a life interest in the property left by her husband, for she had surrendered her dower rights. On her demise the estate passes to her husband's brother and sister, with whom, I regret to say, her relations were not amicable. Though she often told me that she proposed to lay aside part of her income in order to make provision for her niece, Miss Gray, it seems that she utterly neglected to put the plan in operation. In fact, she lived very close to her income, and had it not been for a reduction of her expenses on coming here, it is probable that the revenue from the property, calculated to the day of her death, would not have sufficed to pay the outstanding claims against her. As it is, however, I find that there will be a balance of about five hundred dollars, which will be at Miss Gray's disposal. It is very little for a young woman reared as she has been, but, unfortunately, it is all that she can hope to receive from her aunt."

"She must suffer, then, for another's carelessness," said I.

"Atonement for carelessness is only too often vicarious," said the man of law.

"It hardly lessens her misfortune to realize that it is a common one. Do you know whether she has anything in her own right?"

"Next to nothing. As I have said, Dr. Morris, the case is a distressing one, and I regret exceedingly that I must be the bearer of such bad news to the young lady. She is very likely to come for advice to you, and it is to put you in possession of the facts that I have spoken. A check for your services to my late client will be mailed you immediately upon my return to the city."

Thereupon the lawyer went his way, leaving me by no means so disheartened by his remarks as might have been the case with a man whose regard for Dorothy Gray was entirely platonic. He was as good as his word in settling Mrs. Loring's affairs, and in a few days my check arrived. Another valuable bit of paper reached me about this time from a very different source, one from which it was decidedly unexpected. Jones, the mysterious farm-hand, intrusted it to the mails not long after I had seen him safely on board a train south-bound from Bassettsville. In parting he had thanked me with a good deal of heartiness for my attendance upon him, but had maintained his old reticence as to the character of the business which had brought him to Rodneytown with results so disastrous to himself. The size of the check, though, was sufficient to prove that when he entered Mrs. Weston's employ he was in a position to care little for the pittance she paid him. Banks, too, received a substantial token of the man's gratitude, but he was even less able than I to guess what Jones's mission had been.

These reinforcements to my financial strength helped me to arrive at a decision, though it was a decision burdened with conditions. In

the matter of fortune, Dorothy Gray and I were not very far apart; and surely her position was such as to encourage the most timid of wooers. So far, I found clear sailing. But, once this point had been attained in my calculations, there arose a remnant of the old perplexities. Lamar was still the disturbing factor, for, in spite of the deadly malady which had him in its unrelenting clutches, I could not be certain of his plans, so long as strength remained in him to leave his present quarters should he desire to do so. It could hardly be supposed that he would survive more than a year; at least that was the limit I had fixed, after allowing him what I believed to be a wide margin. A second examination had shown that the disease was advancing steadily. His precarious condition had in no way decreased my aversion for him, but it had had the effect of ending any idea I might have entertained of resigning my post. To desert him now was out of the question. Yet to remain with him meant a postponement of the inevitable struggle for a professional foothold in some city, or even of a partnership with Banks. So long as I was in the hermit's employ I must be free to follow him if need arose. It was my duty, strive as I might to disguise the fact.

Dorothy and I did not continue quite the old friendship. There was a subtle difference in our relations. We were together often, though she seldom drove with me and there were no more boating excursions, but there was something of our former comradeship lacking. She was graver, quieter, more abstracted. The mourning she wore was no meaningless badge of sorrow. She was grieving over her aunt's loss, and, I feared, causelessly reproaching herself for the accident. It was not a time for me to speak: it was better to wait until her thoughts should be less with the dead and more with the living. I had determined, when my opportunity came, to lay my doubts and difficulties fairly before her, and to ask her aid in seeking a way out of them.

But many days wore away before the opportunity was mine. I had asked her to accompany me to Bassettville, and we were riding homeward from that town, with the horse fallen into his laziest jog-trot. For some little time neither of us had spoken. She was preoccupied, I thought, but it did not occur to me to suspect that any unusual cause existed for her abstraction. As for myself,—well, inasmuch as she was by my side, I was fairly content.

"May I ask your advice?" she said at last, breaking the silence.

"Surely, in anything," I answered.

"It seems to be best, but I am not quite satisfied with my own judgment." This she said as if more in explanation to herself than to her hearer. "I am going away."

"Why?" I demanded. "Why, and when, and whither?"

"It must be soon: I've realized it ever since my aunt's death," she said, with a brave effort at composure. "I am poor,—I think you know that. I must find a way to support myself. I have thought that perhaps I could be most useful as a nurse, and that you could tell me where the best training-schools were. The people here have been very, very kind, but I must leave them."

"If you heed my advice you will not go away," said I. "And as

to becoming a nurse, don't dream of such a thing. Have you any idea of the long hours of duty, the responsibility, the strain on mind and body?"

"Yes, I think I understand. But what else is there for me to do? Believe me, this is no hasty decision."

"But it is one you will never cease to regret."

"Regret? I hardly think that,—unless I should find myself incapable."

"Nonsense! Pardon me for speaking so plainly, but that isn't the point at issue. The question you have to decide is this: Do you wish to devote your best years to labors arduous, exacting, often rewarded poorly in money and even less in gratitude, only to find yourself at the end of them broken in health and spirit? I tell you plainly you were not sent into this world to lead such an existence."

"Please don't discourage me," she said, almost entreatingly. "You don't understand. I want to do some good in my life, and the way I have chosen seems to me the best. I cannot teach, I am not a musician, I should starve as a seamstress. But as a nurse——"

"You're the best girl in the world, and the best place for you is right here."

My vehemence seemed to startle her, and she shrank a little from me.

"Dorothy, you must not go," I blundered on. "You speak of making your life useful. Can you not make mine happy? You are more to me than all the rest of the world. Without you I——"

Then words failed me. I tried to take her hand, but she drew it from my clasp.

"Dr. Morris, you are very kind, but—but——"

It was her turn to lose command of her voice, but she regained it quickly.

"Please forget what you have said," she went on. "It will be better so."

"But I don't want to forget it. I want to repeat it. Dorothy, can't you give me hope?"

"Please don't ask me. Why should you?"

"You may consider me ungenerous, but I must have an answer. What shall it be?"

"No."

The word was spoken low, but too distinctly to be mistaken. I looked at her in the vain hope of finding some encouragement in her face. Her eyes were averted, and she was very pale, but she was clearly mistress of herself. In desperation I pulled the horse down to a walk. I was determined to tell my tale through to the bitter end, now that it had been begun, and I desired plenty of time for the recital.

"Dorothy," said I, finding my only grain of comfort in the fact that she suffered me to address her thus, "Dorothy, I—I—love you. I should have revealed my secret long ago, had I felt free to do so. But so many obstacles were in the way. In the first place, I believed

you to be rich. Had I come to you then and made my plea, it would have been with the feeling that I was playing the fortune-hunter. I saw you daily, and daily the longing to speak grew, but I could not yield to it. Not only was I poor, but my prospects were uncertain. I was held by a contract which might call upon me to leave you, to go I knew not whither. If I broke that contract, I should cut off the greater part of the income from which I was trying to save something, with a faint chance that eventually I might be able to seek your hand with less suspicion of mercenary motives. Then Banks asked me to take his practice; but how could I either accept or refuse his proposition? Will you forgive me, Dorothy, if I confess that I rejoiced at the news that you were poor?"

"Was that generous?" she asked, but it seemed to me that there was no reproach in her tone.

"It was selfish, purely selfish, all through. I won't try to make excuses. It would be hypocrisy to attempt them. When a man's in love, he's selfishness itself. After I had learned that one stumbling-block was out of the way, I determined to end my suspense as quickly as possible. Yet I waited day after day,—you know why. But when you said that you were going away, it was too much. Hampered as I am, knowing how unworthy of you I am, Dorothy, I could not resist the temptation. I have had my answer. What happens to me after this won't matter, for I've told you that I love you."

This lucid statement finished, I stared at the trunk of a dead tree on the summit of a little hill far ahead of us, on which my eyes had rested throughout the explanation.

To this day I have a vivid mental photograph of that gaunt trunk and its seven bare branches,—I counted them as carefully as if my fate had depended upon their number.

"I am very glad that you have told me this," said the girl, softly.

"I'm sorry I can't join in the feeling," said I, savagely. "Nothing is very gladdening to me just now."

"I had thought——"

"Well?"

"I had thought, feared, rather, that——"

"Well?" I repeated, still staring at the tree.

"That you were—were asking me out of pity for my poverty."

"You were mistaken."

There was a pause. I continued to glare at the tree; but, after a little, in some way the idea penetrated my brain that the hand withdrawn from me a little while before was now more neighborly. At any rate, a moment later it lay unresistingly in my clasp.

"You were mistaken," I repeated. It was pleasant to hold that hand, even though the privilege was one extended to a rejected suitor.

"And perhaps you were," she said, almost in a whisper.

"Eh! How?" said I, turning to her in perplexity. Her eyes met mine for an instant, and a deep blush mantled her cheeks.

"Can't you imagine?" The words were hardly audible, but at last I understood.

XXI.

Altogether, my memory presents the events of the next few days in a good deal of confusion. I went about as usual, I dare say, visited Lamar, chatted with Mrs. Weston, regularly appeased an excellent appetite, and demanded a slightly unreasonable share of Dorothy's time; but when I endeavor to recall each incident by itself a veil falls, as it were, to end the inquiry. I was too jubilant to heed trifles, and therefore there is now but a shadowy remembrance of delightful days which went only too quickly. Nevertheless, in the course of them we contrived to agree upon a general plan of action,—or rather inaction, for it seemed wise to let matters continue as they were until we could see our way more clearly. To an early marriage Dorothy demurred, not only because of the short time which had passed since the death of Mrs. Loring, but also because, as she argued, a wife might seriously hamper me were Lamar to resume his wanderings and to demand my company in them. She took the view that, considering his condition, it was out of the question to think of ending my connection with him. In a year we should probably be free to go where we pleased, and then it was agreed that there should be a wedding, and, after it, a renewal of the effort to establish a practice in some city. My savings promised to suffice to support two of us for a considerable time, especially as we were willing to observe the most rigid economy. Meanwhile, Dorothy was to remain a member of Mrs. Clark's household.

I have set forth this summary of the plans we made, not because it was fated that they should be carried out, but because there is a degree of satisfaction in recalling the making of them. Almost as soon as we had decided to accept the situation, the events of a few hours wrought a complete change in it.

Lamar's case had presented several unfavorable symptoms, and it had become advisable to alter the treatment. I had driven to Bassettville to have a fresh prescription filled, and, returning, had reached Mrs. Weston's late in the afternoon. Ordinarily I should have postponed delivering the medicine until the next morning, for I had little confidence in the power of any drugs in his behalf; but about nine o'clock in the evening, having bidden an unusually early good-night to Dorothy, I sat down to enjoy a quiet pipe. Smoking induced reflection, however, and after a little I resolved to visit my patient and thus to occupy the hour or two which must elapse before drowsiness would come. The night air was chilly, and a keen wind was blowing from the sea, making the light overcoat I wore a welcome addition to my attire. Approaching the knoll, I saw light streaming from the window of the living-room of the old house, proving that Lamar, in spite of his rapidly failing health, was not yet forced to give up his evenings with his books. A volume in French lay open on the table when he unbarred the door in answer to the double knock which he recognized as mine. With the caution which was a part of his nature, he shot a heavy bolt back into its catch before he resumed his chair.

The table was a heavy piece of furniture, the length of it running on the line of the front door and another in the rear wall opening into

the kitchen. Lamar sat in his usual place, to the left of the table as one entered, with his back to the fireplace. The chair I took was at the end of the table near the entrance. The room was well lighted by a powerful lamp hanging from the ceiling. The floor was carpeted. There was a bookcase in one corner, and two or three chairs stood against the walls, but the room was bare of ornament.

Lamar took the phial of medicine, and heard the directions for its use. It was hardly necessary to tell such a man that there was sufficient strychnine in it to make an overdose a very serious blunder, but, as a matter of form, I gave him the warning.

"The case progresses ill?" he said, after a pause.

"Yes. That is why the treatment is changed."

"The probable limit you mentioned,—was it too great?"

There was no anxiety in his tone. He wanted the truth, and it was as well to let him have it.

"Yes," said I. "Please remember, though, that such estimates are mere guesses."

"I comprehend. It is a game of chance. You but reduce the period the odds favor."

"Exactly."

"To what extent?"

"A month,—perhaps two."

"From the original six?"

"Yes."

Again there was a pause, during which he sat apparently in no wise shaken by such evil tidings. When at last he spoke it was to ask me about my other patients.

"I'm doing next to nothing," said I. "As you know, Mrs. Loring is dead, and as for the natives, they hold to the old doctor. I've made no efforts to supplant him. We're very friendly. He's offered me his succession, but I shall decline it."

"You prefer a city?"

"Yes, even if I have to begin all over again."

He fell silent for a space, and then he asked,—

"There was another lady—she is young—with Mrs. Loring. Has she departed?"

"Oh, no. She will remain here for—for some time."

"Ah!"

The tone gave no reason to suppose that he gauged my interest in the young woman, although I suspected that he measured it accurately.

"Have you any commands?" I asked, rather hastily rising and moving toward the door.

"None."

He, too, rose, with the intention of following me to the door and barring it after I had passed out. His movements were slow, however, and I had drawn the bolt and turned the knob before he was fairly out of his chair. In an instant the door swung back under a violent thrust from without, and I was seized by a powerful man, who hurled me from him with such force that I reeled against the table. As I caught at it for support, I saw Lamar step back to the wall and with a motion

like a flash for quickness press the knob, the use of which he had explained after my discovery of the wire across the marsh. Then, with all his habitual coolness, he returned to his chair, and sat facing the intruders.

Three men had forced their way into the room, and, having locked the door behind them, were now ranged against the table, glaring at Lamar like tigers ready to spring upon their prey. My assailant was of medium height, but heavily built. He was swarthy, black-moustached, and black-haired, with a face which, under the influence of passion, suggested little more than brute ferocity. He was roughly dressed, in this respect differing widely from his companions, whose garments, though evidently designed for hard service, were of costly material. One of these men was young, hardly more than a boy,—a remarkably comely fellow, with clean-cut features and a dark clear skin. The third man, who seemed to be the leader of the raiders, was tall and sinewy. His piercing eyes looked out from under heavy brows; a long moustache failed to hide the firm mouth. There was about this man an air of authority and a soldierly bearing which more than suggested military training. None of the three displayed weapons, though it was not easy to suppose that they had ventured unarmed on their mission.

The peril Lamar had dreaded had come upon him: the enemy he had fled from had found him at last. With all my experience of his marvellous nerve, I was amazed at the unshrinking courage with which he confronted his foes. Not a muscle of his face quivered. The only change I could mark was in his eye; the old look of the fugitive had gone, and in its place was the fierce light of desperate hate.

For a time which seemed almost an eternity, though probably it could have been measured in seconds, no one spoke. Then the tall stranger, after motioning to his companions to change their places,—a manoeuvre which brought the stripling opposite me, as I stood at Lamar's right,—addressed the master of the house, pouring out upon him in the native tongue of both of them a stream of invectives, as I could guess from an occasional expletive of which I caught the meaning. As he spoke, half-smothered curses broke from the others. The man who had thrust me back seemed to be beside himself with rage, while I could see the fingers of the youth working convulsively, as if in anticipation of the moment of closing about Lamar's throat.

When the first burst of passion had spent itself, the spokesman began what appeared to be the recital of some terrible story. More than once he paused dramatically, but only to proceed with renewed fierceness. Withal, he made slow work of it,—no doubt for the joy of prolonging his enemy's ordeal,—for his tale was still unfinished when the only reinforcement we could hope for arrived. There was the sound of a door thrown open, then quick steps as the new-comer crossed the kitchen, and then Johnson burst into the room. With a bound he was beside Lamar, panting from his run, but quite prepared to take a hand in whatever might be doing.

It was a strange scene that the lamp shone down upon. There we were, three to three, ranged on either side of the table, the attacking

force no longer outnumbering the defenders, but, of course, far better prepared for a struggle. They had blundered in delaying it, and now for a moment they hesitated, exchanging quick glances, and giving the fisherman an opportunity to study them. Lamar sat motionless, except for his eyes, which followed every movement of his chief adversary.

Suddenly the tall man gave a short quick order, and the youth, stepping to the door, opened it, and whistled shrilly. We heard an answering signal, followed by the sounds of some one approaching the house, and then a fourth man, dressed like the ruffian at whose hands I had suffered, appeared in the door-way. The light dazzled him at first, and he halted on the threshold, shading his eyes with his left hand and displaying an ugly-looking knife in his right. While he stood there, his mate, with an oath, whipped out a similar weapon and sprang toward the table. Quick as the man was, however, Johnson was quicker, grappling him and hurling him back against the wall with such force that he lay stunned by the blow. I had had high respect for the fisherman's muscles, but never had I credited them with the ability to put forth such power as was evidenced by the crash of the burly stranger against the wall.

Again the defence had gained an advantage, but the odds were still against it. Three able-bodied assailants remained, and all of them now gave proof that they were armed; for, while Johnson was putting his man out of the fight, the leader and the young fellow opposite me had drawn daggers, although they had been unable to use them in aid of their ally, so speedily had he been worsted. I dare say they had revolvers as well, but preferred cold steel for the work they expected to do. Even on that lonely knoll a fusillade of pistol-shots might have attracted attention from the people of the knot of houses half a mile away. I know that the blades had a most wicked look, and that the sweat gathered on my forehead as I watched them and wondered which of them might be destined for me. I was frightened, thoroughly frightened; such courage as I possessed vanished at the gleam of the weapons, and, could I have fled, not a moment would I have tarried. But there was no escape; I was forced to remain and to see the end, which, though it involved the defeat of the enemy, I had no hand in bringing about.

Well-laid plans once disarranged are generally worse than none at all. The programme of the assailants, no doubt, had been prepared most carefully. After posting one of their number on the landward side of the knoll, the only direction from which, in their ignorance of the line of communication with Johnson's cottage, they would reasonably look for interference, they had advanced, and forced an entrance to the house. Once within, their prey was so completely in their grasp that, I dare say, they felt able to go about their business with cold-blooded deliberation. I do not flatter myself with the belief that my presence disturbed them in the least. But, while the arraignment of Lamar may have been intensely satisfying as a prelude to their vengeance, it was a sad blunder; for it gave Johnson time to reach the scene and to change the whole aspect of the affair.

Had they pressed the attack as soon as their comrade was over-

thrown, it is altogether likely that one of them might have reached Lamar; but, unluckily for them, they failed to seize the opportunity in the second or two of its existence. Their hesitation, brief as it was, meant defeat; for no sooner had his man fallen than Johnson drew a brace of revolvers from his pockets, and when the strangers started forward they looked into the muzzles of the pistols. Lamar, too, thus protected, had pulled out a key and was unlocking a drawer of the table; and presently he added another ugly-looking weapon to the array trained upon the foe.

"Sorry there ain't none for you, doctor," I heard Johnson remark, "but I guess we can 'tend to our friends now."

For a moment I thought that two of our adversaries would risk the bullets, though the last comer quailed at the first sight of the fire-arms; but even for them the odds were now too great. They dared not even risk trying to reach their own pistols. They probably had no stomach for such a combat as was now offered them. Reluctantly, step by step, they retreated toward the door. Then, suddenly, with an oath, the leader wheeled about, and, gnashing his teeth in baffled rage, strode from the room.

"Here, you two," cried Johnson, "carry off your wounded."

I doubt if they understood his words, but his gesture as he pointed to the man lying unconscious on the floor was plain enough. Sullenly they picked up their comrade and bore him into the open air. The fisherman followed them to the door, and watched them hurry away toward the stream on the north side of the little hill.

"Come in a boat, eh?" said he. "That's it: you can hear the oars. I'll bet they've something to do with that schooner lying off there in the bay. Well, Mr. Lamar, they're off, and I guess they've had enough, thank ye, for one evenin'."

"It was fortunate they chose to do their talking first and their business afterward," said I. "But I think we're quit of them for some time to come. The abuse that tall chap showered on you was unpleasant, but it was mighty valuable, as I figure it out."

"Did you comprehend?" Lamar asked.

"No, except that he was cursing you as energetically as he could." He seemed relieved at the answer.

"How are you feeling?" said I. "That's not the sort of entertainment that does you any good. It must not be repeated."

"Yet it has profited me," he answered. "I am stronger, better."

"But you'll pay for it, I am afraid. Let me see how you have stood it."

"Not now," said he, waving me back. "To-night I have work to do. May I request you both to remain here for a time?"

"Certainly. We should not think of leaving you before day-break."

"That will suffice," he answered. "For the present, I go to my room."

"Johnson, what do you make of all this?" I asked, when Lamar had left us.

"Not much," he answered, "'cept 'twas a close shave for the boss.

I thought he'd have trouble with that locked drawer if ever he wanted to get at his guns in a hurry. Why, if he'd tried to open it before I come, they'd have carved him into mince-meat before he could have got to his weepins. He would keep it locked, though, and you know he ain't a man to argy with. Lucky I brought my brace along; but 'twas his orders I should, whenever I got the call."

"Why did they pursue him to this corner of the earth? What's the secret, anyway?"

"It's clean beyond me," said he. "Some furrin feud, I reckon."

"This is never the end of it."

"It won't end till somebody's dead," he answered, emphatically. "Like enough a killin' was the start of it."

XXII.

Whatever business was occupying Lamar, it was not of the sort to be disposed of quickly. Hour after hour passed, and still he did not rejoin us. At last I climbed the stairs, and, knocking at the door of his room, asked if there was anything he desired us to do.

"At present, nothing," he answered.

"No use tryin' to nudge him," Johnson observed, when I returned to the living-room. "He'll let us know fast enough when the time comes. You'd better get some sleep, doctor, if you can curl up comfortable in a chair. I'll stand watch."

Nothing better suggesting itself, I tried to follow the fisherman's advice, at first with very indifferent success. The events of the evening had not been of the sort to make one sleepy. So I sat in my corner, speculating on the probable outcome of the encounter. What Lamar's plans would be it was difficult to foretell. Physically he was in poor condition to undertake further flight from his enemies, yet he would hardly dare to remain without establishing a small standing army. Johnson had covered himself with glory, but he was but one man: and I did not enumerate myself as a part of the belligerent force. Again, the excitement and worry the presence of his enemies must cause would certainly have an extremely bad effect upon Lamar, aggravating his disease and cutting short even the scant allowance of time I had estimated as his. If anything could have overcome my extreme repulsion for him, it must have been the cool courage he had displayed in the face of danger; but, though I appreciated it, I could not bring myself to a more kindly feeling for the man who had exhibited it in such trying circumstances. What would Dorothy have to say to such part of the tale as I could tell her? I was thinking more of her and less of Lamar, when my eyes closed from weariness.

Johnson's hand on my shoulder brought me back from my dreams.

"He's called for you," he said. "He wants you to go up to his room."

"Very well; I'll go: but what's the time?" I asked, grinding my knuckles into my eyes.

"'Most six o'clock. The sun's just risin'."

Reaching the head of the stairs, I heard Lamar's voice from the rear room, one which he had never before invited me to enter.

"Come in," he said. "I regret to have detained you so long, but my task is at last completed."

In spite of his efforts to maintain the old steady tone, his voice sounded hoarse and full of weariness; and all that it suggested was more than borne out by his face, upon which fell the cold light of the morning, revealing with pitiless distinctness the traces of the struggle of an indomitable will against physical weakness. His pallor was ghastly, the skin was drawn above the temples, the cheeks were sunken, the lines about the mouth were grown to furrows. His eyes burned with a feverish fire. The hand which rested on the desk at which he sat shook, notwithstanding its support. I had never seen the man in such a state,—so completely mastered by his infirmities. How he had been able to work through the night was almost beyond comprehension, though the bottle of brandy at his elbow showed that he had had the aid of a stimulant. It had carried him through, but at a fearful price. Plainly, it was no longer a question of weeks or months with him; his days, perhaps his hours, were numbered.

On the desk before him lay a sealed letter, a check-book, a sheet of paper covered with figures, and the little black valise which he had guarded so jealously on our journey to Rodneytown, and which I had not rested eyes upon since the day of our arrival.

He motioned me to a seat beside him.

"Dr. Morris," said he, "last night's visitation warned me to perform certain duties which, in view of my failure of health, had too long been neglected. I desire your assistance in the completion of them."

"I am at your orders," said I. "For the little while that remains for you," I added to myself.

He opened the hand-bag and took from it a paper, which, upon being unfolded, appeared to be a petition or agreement of some sort; for appended to several closely written paragraphs was a long list of signatures. He gave me no time, however, to decipher either text or names. Striking a match, he set fire to the document, which was burning briskly before he dropped it to the floor. As the flame grew, I saw that about it lay several little heaps of fluffy ash, no doubt all that remained of other papers he had chosen to put out of the way. He watched the fire creep along until the whole sheet was ablaze.

"If the question arise, as it may, you can make oath that a document of this appearance was destroyed," said Lamar. "You may feel free so to do. No one suffers by the destruction of it, though many might by its preservation."

"I will certify to the fact," said I. "But who will make inquiry about it?"

"Possibly no one. But, if inquiry is made, they who ask will understand."

He opened the check-book and passed it to me. It was one I had given to him months before, though, as the funds deposited in the bank at Trent stood in my name, he could have had little use for the book. In fact, none of the printed forms had been filled in.

"I desire to make provision for Johnson," he explained. "He is deserving of a reward. Make a check to his order."

"Very well," said I, picking up a pen. "For how much?"

"Five thousand dollars."

I looked at him in wonder. Was he playing a practical joke of some sort? But he met my gaze, and repeated his words: "Five thousand dollars." After all, to a man in his position the fisherman's services certainly had been valuable. I filled up the form, and tore it from its stub. Lamar took the slip of paper and thrust it into his pocket.

"You comprehend the reason in these matters," said he. "It is necessary to arrange with an eye to the worst. I fear a sudden failure, a collapse. If such should be my end, I wish to have my affairs in order. For Johnson provision is now made. To Martha, who has been a faithful servant, I would give, let us say, five hundred dollars. I count upon you to arrange the matter."

"I will do so," said I.

"And as for yourself——"

"You have paid me well," I broke in. But he continued:

"As for you, I desire this: when my death comes, you will regard as your own the money deposited in the bank in your name. There will be no rival claimant. From my memory of the account you submitted recently, I am convinced that you will find a considerable sum remaining after the two payments you know of have been made. I may tell you that the fund has been of late replenished."

"But why should you make me such a bequest?" I began. "I thank you, but——"

"It is no case for thanks," said he. "Am I not free to do as pleases me with my own? Moreover, I have yet another request."

He poured a little brandy into a glass and gulped it down. Then, picking up the letter, he said,—

"This I desire you to place in the post at the railway town at once. Then send a telegraphic message. Please write the words, 'Search ended, but without result. Documents burned.' The address the same as that of the letter."

"What signature to the despatch?"

"None is required. Go at once, and return as soon as possible."

"I shall start immediately," said I, rising. "Take my advice and get some rest, if you can. I need not tell you how you need it. By the way, double the dose of that medicine I brought you last night. I shall return within three hours, and in that time it ought to have some effect."

He bowed gravely, and I left him seated at his desk, a mere wreck of the man he had been even a few hours before. In that strong morning light death's seal appeared to be upon him.

Cautioning Johnson not to leave the house, I hurried across the plain to Mrs. Weston's, harnessed the bay more hastily than he ever had been harnessed before, and started him off briskly along the Bassettville road. I drove fast that morning, as fast as even the swift roadster cared to go. The telegraph operator was just coming on duty

when I reined up beside the platform of the railway station, and to him I lost no time in committing the message. Its address, which I copied from that of the letter, was the banking house in New York with which Lamar had communicated previously. Five minutes later I had posted the letter, and was beginning my journey homeward.

Sam Carpenter gave me a friendly greeting as I passed his stable, but there was no time for gossip, and the bay sped by at a gait which no doubt satisfied him that there was urgent need of my services in Rodneytown. Nor did I draw rein until the farm-houses were close at hand and I saw Dorothy at Mrs. Clark's door.

"Where in the world have you been?" she asked, running across the yard to the road, and gazing up at me anxiously. "Mrs. Weston says that you were away all night. And your horse looks as if you had been trying to drive him to death."

"You shall hear all about it, Dorothy," I answered, "but I can't tell you now. I must go on to Lamar's; but I'll come back as soon as I can. Things have happened which may make a great difference to us."

I left her somewhat piqued, perhaps, by my brusqueness, and drove on toward the house on the knoll. Johnson was awaiting me at the base of the landward side of the elevation.

"Anything new?" I asked, as I leaped from the buggy.

"Nothin' for the last hour or so. Soon after you left he called me up and give me somethin',—I guess you know what. Since then I've heard nothin' from him."

I ran into the house, climbed the stairs, and knocked at Lamar's door. There was no response. I softly turned the knob, thinking that he might be asleep. He was still seated in his chair, but his head had fallen forward upon the desk, and his arms hung motionless. I sprang to him, raised him, and caught sight of his face. One look was enough. Lamar was beyond the reach of his enemies.

As to the manner of his death I was not long left in doubt. Beside the desk was found a little phial in which remained a few drops of a solution of arsenic. Months before I had brought him the poison, to be used, as he had explained, in certain of his chemical experiments. With the foes who had pursued him so relentlessly close upon him, and with a mortal disease daily sapping his strength, he had chosen thus to end his troubles. He died, I think, as he had lived, strong in his passions and his courage.

It was to be desired, for many reasons, to avoid the notoriety which must surely follow a disclosure of the circumstances of his end. Johnson and I could be depended upon to keep our counsel, and old Martha probably had heard nothing of the attack, and had no reason to suppose her employer's death to have been due to other than natural causes; but even a suspicion of suicide would give rise to most unpleasant gossip, and quite possibly to an official investigation. By law, a certificate of death had to be filed with the town clerk. I realized the weight the people would attach to Banks's signature to such a document in case any question of its accuracy arose, and determined to secure it. My senior heard what I had to say of the facts,—enough, probably, to

give him an inkling of the truth. Then he seated himself at Lamar's desk—I had taken him to the house on the knoll to view the body of its late master—and filled out a certificate.

"This will, I think, meet your requirements," said he. "It is not too definite, but it will serve. It is recorded here that your patient died of 'heart-failure.'"

XXIII.

Not until several months later did I hear something of the part of Lamar's story which explained his coming into my life. A letter from Perez brought this explanation, for which I had been waiting eagerly. Neither Johnson nor I had had sight again of any of Lamar's pursuers, who, however, we believed, had contrived to secure proof that their intended victim had evaded their vengeance. The strange schooner had not re-entered the bay, but the fisherman had heard that a vessel answering her description had lain for three days at anchor in a little harbor some miles up the coast, and that at least four of her people had been away from her throughout her stay. It was his theory that the four revisited the house the night before Lamar's funeral; though the man whom I had employed to assist Johnson as watcher and care-taker, and who was then on duty, reported no unusual happening, and the fisherman's belief had, so far as I could discover, no more substantial basis than the fact that as he approached the house late that night the sea-breeze bore to his ears faint sounds which he took for those of oars against thole-pins.

My term of residence in Rodneytown was closed within a fortnight after the body of the suicide had been committed to the earth; but before I went away there was a wedding, at which an altogether charming bride was given away by my good friend Dr. Banks, standing for the time *in loco parentis*. In view of the change in our circumstances, I had persuaded Dorothy to consent to an early marriage, and to come with me to Trent, where there promised to be an excellent opportunity to establish a practice, and where the bay might become a doctor's nag in reality as well as in name. And there Perez's letter found us, as happy a pair as the city held within its borders. As Lamar's residuary legatee,—if the term can be correctly used in such a case,—I was possessed of an inheritance which, with my savings, was amply sufficient to support us in comfort for the several years we deemed it wise to allow for the building up of a profitable professional connection.

But now for the letter, which was to tell me all I have ever learned of the career of the man whom I knew as Lamar.

"He was of a family of rank and wealth," it ran. "He had much to content him with his lot, yet he was by nature an intriguer and a plotter, cold, selfish, daring, and revengeful. Many hated him, more feared him. So adroit was he in his schemes that, though they sometimes came to grief, he himself escaped.

"At last he became involved in a political plot of the gravest character, and for once lost his craft. There was a meeting of the conspirators at which enthusiasm ran high, and, in the furor of the

moment, a compact was drawn up and signed by those present. So treasonable was this document that the signers were hopelessly compromised should it fall into the hands of even the most mercifully disposed government. Within twenty-four hours after the meeting the paper disappeared. The signers set themselves to search for it, and at last gained a clue. Following this, they discovered that it had come into the possession of a woman of rank, young, beautiful, ambitious, mad for political intrigue, and attached to a rival faction. The fact that she had secured it was sufficient to insure the failure of the project it outlined; but worse than this failure was the menace to the signers. It was resolved to recover the compact at any cost; but then arose the question, who should undertake the difficult task? The man who afterward came to you volunteered, and was accepted.

"He recovered the document. Single-handed he waylaid the lady's carriage, drove off her servants, and, on her refusal to surrender the paper, cut her throat. As he had expected, the precious paper was found in the bosom of her dress.

"He fled the country forthwith, carrying with him the cause of the tragedy. So long as he retained possession of it, he was certain of holding his co-conspirators at his mercy. Many of them abhorred his bloody deed, but he held their fortunes and perhaps their lives in his hand; and some of them, at least, were forced to aid him in making his escape. The family of his victim swore undying vengeance. Her brothers traced him to Europe, and then to the United States. They were close upon him when he sought your aid: had it not been given, he could hardly have escaped; for in your country a man of his face and accent was easily traced,—he impressed the persons he met far too strongly for his own good.

"He had heard of the lonely coast you described to me, and he had carried with him the card he presented to you. It was given to him, not because I was myself involved in the political net, but because others whom I loved were fast in its meshes, and for their sake I desired him not to fall into the clutches of the avengers. When he came to you, the pursuers lost the trail. They searched and searched, but for months without result. After a time I was told of rumors that he had opened correspondence with his brothers at home, and that they were supplying him with large sums. His enemies also heard the reports, and strove in every way to hit upon the channel of communication, but their efforts seemed to be doomed to failure.

"Chance finally did what skill and bribery could not effect. By accident, a traveller who, through friendship for the murdered woman's kinsmen, had aided them in their hunt, stumbled upon the fugitive's hiding-place, and is even said to have seen, from an ambush of his own, the murderer moving about his retreat. The discoverer lost no time in bearing the news to his allies. Two of the victim's brothers, with a force of assistants in whom they could trust, sailed hence, ostensibly for France. Rumors current here have it that they arrived only to find that their enemy was dead. It is also said that the compact is destroyed. If you have any knowledge of its fate you may relieve many anxious hearts."

Lamar's pursuers had been the avengers of blood. By my aid he had evaded them, yet through me they had come upon him at last. Fortune's caprice had granted him but a reprieve, allowing him, in the end, only the privilege of dying by his own hand rather than by the hands of his foes. Baffled in their vengeance as they would have carried it out, they had as partial compensation the knowledge that they had forced him to the dread alternative. A penalty—if not that which they desired—had been paid for his crime.

THE END.

ETHICS AND ECONOMICS.

MUCH of the writing on industrial subjects to-day assumes that the economic man died several years ago, was buried in a shroud of Manchester cotton, and has his resting-place marked by a monument more lasting than brass, built of the hearts of the extinct race of classical economists. This assumption colors not only the writings of socialists, Christian and Pagan, but also those of some careful observers and thorough students whose methods and conclusions are generally sound. It is time to find out what relation ethics bears to economics: if philanthropy really has taken possession of a part of the field which was once occupied by political economy, the latter should recognize that further resistance is hopeless, and surrender at once.

The view of this matter taken by Dr. Schulze-Gaevernitz is the more important, and also the more surprising, because his "Social Peace" is a valuable contribution to industrial history, and opens to the view the possibility—nay, the certainty—of industrial peace instead of war; the co-operation of the sellers and the buyers of labor, attained as the result of the continued and more perfect interaction of purely economic forces. His book is evidence of the value of the economic man to the social man, the intellectual man, the æsthetic man, and even the ethical man. Yet he imagines that the ethical man is displacing the economic man, or, rather, that the economic man was the creation of the disordered imagination of the classical economists, who are now, luckily for the world, pretty much all dead. "The classical economists," he tells us on page 34, "take only the egoistic instincts of humanity into account, that is to say, the 'wealth-acquiring instinct' and the 'sexual instinct.' But it is one of their peculiarities that, in complete accordance with the philosophy of their time, they substituted for the actual members of society, with their very varied endowments, a number of abstract similar and equally endowed individuals. Hence they deduced the desirability of free and universal competition, since each individual would naturally understand his own advantage best and would pursue it most diligently. It was imagined that if all were free to compete, social harmony would come of itself."

But it is on exactly those lines that the doctor finds the industrial world of England already far advanced on the road to social peace. In England there is a larger measure of industrial freedom than on the Continent, and he is our witness that social peace is much nearer in the former than on the latter. It is perhaps true that there is even more industrial freedom in the United States than in England, and unless Dr. Gaevernitz has exaggerated the signs of promise in England the social peace he pictures is farther from us than from Great Britain; but this is easily explained. Our industrial development is more recent, and we are dealing with more heterogeneous materials. We may be behind England, but we are travelling the same pathway of contention to the same goal of contentment.

There has been legislation in the interest of the wage-earners, but

this has been the result and not the cause of economic changes. Very little of it has gone beyond the repeal of ancient restrictions on the freedom of the wage-earners. So far as the law has fixed the hours of labor, it has done little or nothing beyond making universal what had already become general, and the restrictions put upon child-labor are analogous to sanitary and police regulations. The trade-unions are represented to have done much to advance social peace, but they do not invade the general principles of free competition. The laborer allies himself with other laborers in the trade-union as the capitalist allies himself with other capitalists in joint-stock companies, if he thinks he can thereby fight the industrial battle to better advantage. Nothing has yet occurred to shake the confidence of the classical economists, and of those who think they have never been greatly improved upon, in the doctrine that men should enter the field of production and distribution alone or in association with others according to their ideas of their own interests.

It is true that man has many endowments besides the wealth-acquiring and the sexual instinct, but the latter accounts for his continuity, and the former accounts for all his acts as a producer and consumer. We say all; there are "sports" in nature; the sun is the source of all heat, yet the isothermal lines are not parallel with the equator or the ecliptic. Here is a man who might manufacture cotton cloth and grow rich, but lives in poverty and preaches the gospel to the heathen. Another man works for two dollars a day when he might get three if he would live remote from his family. Here is a man whose enthusiasm in his employer's business is such that he spends his evenings as well as his days in the shop or office, though he is not expected to and gets no extra pay therefor. Do these sporadic cases invalidate the general conclusions that a man would not work if he could satisfy his wants without, that he works for his own benefit and not for that of other people, and that he will do that kind of work, so far as choice is afforded him, which yields the largest amount of compensation? These and other things that may be predicated of the economic man are true whether he be gentle or brutal, of domestic tastes or the reverse, Christian or Pagan, fond of music and art or indifferent to both. If the other endowments of men do not materially affect his conduct as a producer and consumer, why may we not disregard them, dissect them away, so to speak, and in economic matters consider only the economic man?

On page 281 Dr. Gaevernitz speaks of "the demolition of those class distinctions which spring from differences of thought and education, and the unfettered development of every human mind. The further we go in this direction, the more completely does the social centre of gravity shift away from the privileged classes and toward the masses of the people. This new tendency is quite foreign to the older political economy, which looked upon the accumulation of capital as the object of the existence of society. On the other hand, it is in complete harmony with the principle of Christianity, which attaches an absolute value, greater than that of all earthly things, to a human being as such."

The older political economists were not wholly uninfluenced by the practical business men, who thought society existed not for the accumulation of wealth in general, but for their personal enrichment. These men, who were enthusiastic over so much political economy as served their own immediate interests, and who fought against so much political economy as seemed to them in the interest of some other class, left heirs. The men of England who wanted the apprentice laws repealed and the combination laws retained were the practical business men of that day, whose counterparts constitute the mass of the practical business men of this day, here and elsewhere, and a survivor of them may easily be found in England, surrounded by no small amount of religious and philanthropic activity, and surmounted by a coronet. But neither the older nor the newer political economy is made up of personal and class interests, though their trail can be easily traced across the pages of both.

But what is the object of society, if it be not to accumulate wealth? The development of the mind, the refinement of the taste, the salvation of the soul? All the social and intellectual and æsthetic ends that men aim at are attained by wealth, not necessarily as an individual but certainly as a community possession. Has the human race anywhere laid aside the pursuit of wealth in order to cultivate its taste or its mind? How long would either taste or mind survive such a change? The individual may give up the pursuit of wealth in order to pursue art, but only on condition that the overwhelming majority of men keep on pursuing wealth. If the aspirations for a wider intellectual vision, for the satisfaction of the higher senses and the ennoblement of conduct, either have no effect upon the struggle for wealth or stimulate it, why may we not disregard them, or at least relegate them to the second place, and consider the naked economic man? The removal of the cuticle destroys the beauty of a human body, but it lays bare the means of exertion and the springs of action.

And once more for the German student of English industrial history: on page 50 he says, "The classical English political economy . . . based social harmony on the free competition of individuals. What then was left for the State? It must keep violence out of the conflict of interests. That is to say, its only function was the protection of property." To this he ought certainly to have added the protection of the person.

If anything has ever been gained by the State's assumption of functions beyond that of protecting person and property and keeping "violence out of the conflict of interests," the evidence of it is far from clear. Dr. Gaevernitz's own study of the industrial history of England affords evidence on every page of the injustice done and damage wrought by the State when it has gone beyond this. If nine-tenths of the producers find ten hours or nine hours or eight hours economically advantageous, the State may perhaps compel the minority to comply, but unless the reduced hours are economically advantageous they cannot be enforced, and if they are they need not be. The law may, however, be permitted to accelerate a change which is inevitable and abridge a transition-period which is full of confusion. The law may

throw certain restrictions about the employment of women and children in the interest of the public health. But the advance that the working classes of England have made in the past half-century is due to the withdrawal of the State from a field where its action for centuries accomplished only evil to the weaker multitude in the interest of the powerful few.

Since fifty years ago there has been here, as well as in England, a great reduction in the hours of labor. But this was not accomplished for the pleasure of the wage-earners; it was accomplished because experience proved that after a certain state of fatigue had been reached labor was unprofitable. The hours may be still further reduced. A large volume of evidence has been collected in the last few years to show that production is even more economical with an eight-hour than with a nine-hour or a ten-hour day. Experiments in this direction are in progress. If what is claimed for the eight-hour day be proved,—and it has been partially proved,—the eight-hour day will come into general use. But otherwise no amount of ethics or philanthropy or Christianity will bring it in. Men are always, everywhere, trying to get all they can. If they can get more by working ten hours than by working eight, ten hours will they work.

Wages have been largely increased in the past fifty years, but this is due purely to economic causes. The "principle of Christianity which attaches an absolute value, greater than that of all earthly things, to a human being as such," has not induced any employer to increase wages. It can be shown that this principle has led to the improved condition of the laboring classes, but it has done so in accordance with economic laws, and not by suspending them, or violating them, or substituting benevolent for selfish instincts. Invention and the extension of human control over the powers of nature have enormously increased the amount of product, of wealth, that can be got by the labor of each individual. This increase has been distributed, and the laborer has got a part of it; it is not material to this discussion whether he has got his share, or less, or, as some persons believe, more. The material fact is that he has been paid his increased wages out of an increased quantity of production, and not out of an accumulated fund of altruism. No amount of ethics or philanthropy would have been able to pay him increased wages had not some one's inventive skill enabled him to weave more yards of cloth and roll more pounds of iron in a week than his grandfather did.

Not only has the increased product enabled the employer to pay higher wages, and the expansion of modern industry led him to compete with other employers in the purchase of labor, but the increased wages themselves have increased the efficiency of the laborer, so that we have a more startling paradox than Samson's "Out of the eater came forth meat," for out of higher wages has come forth cheaper production. One is not warranted in dogmatizing on the subject, but there is now within the reach of all who care to investigate the subject a large amount of evidence, from many widely scattered sources, to the approximate equality of the cost of labor, with the balance of cheapness generally on the side of the higher wages. This was seen so long

ago as when Adam Smith wrote, but to-day it is only vaguely grasped, if at all, by the practical business men, whose field of observation is a narrow one, whose period of experimentation must be short, and to whom an unsuccessful experiment means personal loss or disaster.

Political economy is by no means a dismal science, and it does not need to have the drapery of philanthropy thrown over it lest it should be repulsive to the eye. Under its laws, during the last half-century, the hours of labor have been reduced, the rates of wages have been increased, and the cost of satisfying human needs, material, intellectual, and social, has been lessened. That prices will always go down and wages always go up can hardly be affirmed, but it is singular that the present time, after many years of rising wages and falling prices, should be selected for a concerted attack on the existing industrial order and a general appeal to substitute ethics, or politics, or both, for economics.

Some years ago a man took charge of a gang of negro laborers who were digging phosphate rock in South Carolina and involving the company they worked for in loss. As the wages of the men were only seventy-five cents a day, the superintendent conjectured that the unprofitableness of the enterprise must be due to the inefficiency of the workers. The company did not see how a deficit was to be abridged by increasing expenses, but allowed the superintendent some latitude in trying experiments, and he supplied the men with rations of corn and pork gratuitously. There was little or no increase in the amount of work done, and the superintendent suspected that the families of the men got most of the food he supplied. He built a mess-shed, hired a cook, and fed the men on the premises. At once there was a marked improvement in the amount of work done. When, in addition to getting an abundant supply of substantial food, the men got a dollar a day instead of seventy-five cents, they did so much work that the company began to make a profit. It would not be quite fair to credit the action of the superintendent to Christianity, for he was a Jew, the representative of a people whose religion particularly enjoined liberality to the poor and the laborer, to whom interest was forbidden, among whom trading was discouraged, and who were restrained from the accumulation of large landed estates. He may have been actuated by humane sentiments, by altruism; but probably he was governed by no higher sentiment than that which moves the farmer to see that his stock is well kept, or the steam engineer to feed his fires with good coal. Whatever motive may have inspired the experiment, only its pecuniary success could have secured its continuance. The stockholders could not have carried on the enterprise at a loss. Without economic justification the condition of the workmen could not have remained improved. The intelligent application of economic principles raised the scale of living of the working-men, and afforded a profit to the capitalists.

In his "Old World Questions and New World Answers," Mr. Daniel Pidgeon, of England, describes a visit to the works of the Wilimantic Thread Company, where the comfort of the employees was studied in ways not sufficiently common. Among other things, "At

nine o'clock every morning the younger hands assemble in detachments to take a cup of milk and a slice of bread and butter. This light refreshment is furnished at the expense of the company." Colonel Barrows said to Mr. Pidgeon, "I proved the value of the milk meal by figures before I allowed the company to pay for it."

In the summer of 1893 the *Board of Trade Journal* (English, official) published a report on the corset factory of Ferris Brothers, Newark, New Jersey, where there were baths which the operatives were allowed to use even during working hours. There was a "retiring-room, in which any of the temporarily indisposed workwomen may lie down in comfort." There was a reading-room, and a dining-room, where cooking-utensils and tea were supplied without charge. In hot weather ice-cream was sold at three cents a bowl. The poorer women could have their clothing made on the machinery of the firm at only the cost of material, and operatives who would spend thirty dollars to go to the World's Fair could have another thirty dollars for that purpose from the firm. "Questioned as to trade disputes, Mr. McGovern, the manager, said they never had any." The *Boston Herald* lately spoke of Mr. Howland, a New Bedford mill manager, "who a few years ago had the tenement houses of a mill which was placed under his charge laid out so as to make attractive homes for the operatives, and did this, not as a matter of philanthropy, but simply because he believed that the tenants were entitled to a fair consideration for the money they paid out in the way of rent." To this *Wade's Fibre and Fabric* added, "Mr. Howland alone, of all the mill managers in Fall River or New Bedford, was undisturbed by the recent strikes."

Now, what is the function of humane sentiment within the range of the labor question? It is that of preparing the capitalist for changes that seem at first to be wholly in the interest of labor, but which are also in the interest of the employer. It is that of disseminating information to the effect that intelligent liberality is as profitable in the purchase of labor as it is in the purchase of fuel and materials. The early judicial decisions in this country in controversies caused by strikes proceeded on the assumption that low wages were in the interest of the community. The laws made and applied by purchasers of labor here, as in England, regarded every advance of wages as a public misfortune. Philanthropy and religion may do much to collect and array evidence that the interests of the community are in line with all advances of wages that do not discourage the industrial application of capital, and that within certain limits, not to be defined except by trial, high wages result in increased efficiency of labor, cheapened production, and reduced selling prices.

This collateral service philanthropy can render. But so far as it acts on its own lines it defeats the object it aims at.

Philanthropy seeks to increase the laborer's earnings. It seeks in vain, for it never can compel men to pay one dollar and twenty-five cents for a service they can procure for one dollar. If it could succeed, it would speedily bring disaster upon the toiling world. The margin of profit is not wide; it has been growing narrower for many years. Any material increase of wages, not due to greater or cheaper produc-

tion, must come out of capital ; the small accumulations of the human race would speedily be exhausted, and we should be back in the hunting and fishing state of existence in much less time than it has taken the human race to advance therefrom to Western civilization. But economics, accused of hardness of heart, destitute of the bowels of compassion, has confined itself to studying and promoting industrial freedom and the accumulation of capital. In proportion as this policy has prevailed, the interests of rich and poor, of capitalist and workman, have been promoted.

Cheapness was the idea of the contemned Manchester economist. His interest in cheapness was largely due to his desire to see the fortune of his neighbor the cotton manufacturer wax large. His altruism was very limited, but he was on the side of natural law, and the best policy for the individual or the community is to obey natural law. Cheapness is the foundation of civilization. High wages would never have brought about cheapness, but cheapness has brought about high wages. Egoism has accomplished what altruism longed for. Cheapened production has resulted in lower prices, larger sales, greater profits at smaller rates, more investment in productive enterprises, more demand for labor, better prices for labor, and shorter hours and more sanitary surroundings for labor. The lint that floated in the atmosphere of the cotton-spinning room was injurious to health, but the remedy was found through the desire to prevent the waste of material. The extensive employment of children in factories was due to the supposition that low wages and cheap labor were identical. Had that been true, philanthropy would have been as impotent to drive children out of the factories as to make water run up-hill. The bulletins on manufactures that the Census Office has been issuing have regularly pointed out that much of the apparent increase in average wages between 1880 and 1890 was due to the substitution of adult for child labor. In the ten years the number of men employed in manufacturing concerns increased forty-two and seven-tenths per cent., the number of women decreased about five per cent., and the number of children decreased forty-two per cent. The factory inspectors of the State of New York report that the number of children under sixteen employed in factories was a fraction under thirty-four in each one thousand persons in 1893, compared with thirty-eight per thousand in 1892 and one hundred and twelve per thousand in 1887. "The manufacturers are becoming convinced by experience," say the inspectors, "that child labor is not cheap labor," though the inspectors attribute the change in part to the greater interest of the parents in their children's education. If any considerable number of parents keep their children at school when they could have set them to earning wages in a factory, it would be worth while to present some evidence of the fact.

The intellectual man, the ethical man, and the social man keep the economic man busy if the physical man ever gives them a chance to get hold of him. No sooner are man's physical wants supplied than he develops other wants, which he works harder than ever to supply. Now, cheapness means that with the limited amount of labor (which is his capital) which he can perform he can supply an increased number

of wants, and so rise in the scale of civilization. The difference between the civilized man and the savage lies in the number of wants the former is conscious of, and which he more or less fully supplies. Cheapness means civilization, by way of good wages, but if the good wages were first secured the cheapness could not follow and the good wages could not long be maintained.

The economic man not only exists, but he may be studied anywhere, sordidly seeking to get the largest compensation for his exertions, and acting as if the wealth-acquiring and sexual instincts were dominating him. By the play of these instincts, subject to such regulations as are necessary to enable men to live in contact with each other, the human race grows in number and capacity, and slowly adds to the wealth without which the social and ethical and æsthetic and intelligent man could not exist.

Fred. Perry Powers.

FRENCH ROADS.

THE laudable efforts now being made in some parts of the United States to improve our poor highways have turned attention to the general excellence of the roads of Europe. At such times it is occasionally remarked, "But we cannot hope for many decades to attain this same state of perfection, for these Old World roads were begun generations ago." This is a mistake. In some Continental countries men scarcely in the decline of life can recall the time when they were surrounded with roads no better than those that abound in all parts of our Union. It may encourage the American laborers in this good cause to know this fact.

I shall limit my consideration of European roads to those of a single French department, in order to simplify the presentation; and I have selected a region far removed from all great lines of travel, containing no large cities and possessing almost wholly an agricultural population, my purpose in so doing being to obtain conditions as nearly as possible corresponding to those of the country districts of the United States.

The rural department of the Tarn, formed from a portion of the upper part of the old province of Languedoc, covers an area of some two thousand two hundred square miles, whose greatest length from north to south is a little over sixty miles. It is a very hilly country, some of these hills becoming almost mountains: so road-making is not there an over-easy task. The department contains a stationary or diminishing population of about three hundred and forty thousand souls. Its annual receipts were, by the census of 1891, 2,188,868 francs, and its expenditures, 1,787,694 francs. Let us see, now, what this rather backward and out-of-the-way corner of France has to report in the matter of public highways.

In the first place, it may be well to state that there are in the Tarn, and, for that matter, in all the departments of France, I believe, five

classes of roads, known as national, departmental, grand communication, common interest, and ordinary vicinal. The first are those magnificent broad highways made and kept in order by the central government. Most of them are old, some more ancient than the monarchy itself. They were the great military and diligence routes before the creation of railroads. They are of little account in this study, both because of their antiquity and because the people of the Tarn had scarcely anything to do with their construction. Only five of them cross the department, two hundred miles of this sort of road lying within its boundaries.

The next most important category of highways are the departmental roads, which are to the Tarn what the national roads are to France. There are thirty-three of them, five hundred and sixty miles in length, and they were built and are kept in order with the funds of the whole department.

The three remaining classes—grand communication, common interest, and ordinary vicinal, whose nature is pretty well explained by their nomenclature—are to-day officially designated by the one name vicinal roads. They are to be counted by scores and measured by hundreds of miles. They are chiefly the work of the *communes*, or towns and villages, and so are more interesting to us.

I propose now to examine more closely the history of these two grand classes of departmental and vicinal roads.

None of these roads existed prior to 1836. Before that date, and for many years after it, the inhabitants of the Tarn had to put up with what were little better than ox-paths. You can still see traces of them,—steep, narrow, and twisting. Then the Tarn peasantry were fair equestrians, for it was only on a horse's back that one could get easily from town to town. To-day the only beasts of burden in the barns are cows,—a curious proof of the improved condition of the roads; while stowed away in lofts you occasionally happen on a "cow carriage," that is, a vehicle drawn by cows, now food for worms and moths, but a generation ago the means of transportation of the Tarn ladies visiting from one château to another, for no horse and carriage could travel the roads as they then were.*

Such was the condition of the department of the Tarn, as regards roads, at the time of Louis Philippe's reign. But from then down to the present year, road-building has gone on slowly but steadily during all the changes in government at Paris, until the fortunate inhabitants of this "back-woods" department have now an immense net-work of well-built and well-kept highways that would delight the heart of even the most exacting bicyclist,—hundreds of miles of good macadam, so gently graded that a horse could trot almost every rod of it, some-

* When Maurice de Guérin was brought down from Paris, in the last stages of consumption, by his worshipping sister Eugénie (see Matthew Arnold's "Essays on Criticism," not for the fact I narrate, but for a charming account of these two Tarn literary celebrities), he had to leave the carriage at Cahuzac, and, weak though he was, mount a horse for the remaining mile or two of his journey. To-day an excellent little vicinal road leads from Cahuzac almost to the very door of his beloved Château du Cayla.

times so broad that a regiment could march along it company front, and so dry, smooth, and hard in summer as to be scarcely inferior to the drive-ways of Central Park.

The large sums of money required to build these roads have been procured by loans and taxation, the first loan of this kind, for 1,500,000 francs, having been negotiated in 1839; and the energy with which the work was pushed is shown by the funds annually expended. Thus, the departmental roads alone called, in 1839, for 519,000 francs; in 1840, for 508,000; in 1841, for 500,000; in 1842, for 488,000; in 1843, for 477,000; and in 1844, for 466,000. At the same time the vicinal roads were also under way. Thus, in 1843 the department voted 94,000 francs for this purpose, and the communes a far greater sum. But a quarter of a century later these vicinal roads were devouring a much more important total. In 1866, for example, it was 1,123,329 francs, of which the state contributed only 39,847 and the department 241,855, while the share of the communes was 741,626, or nearly three-quarters of the whole sum, a fact to be noted as showing the popular interest in this movement for good roads. This disposition is seen in almost every page of the history of this effort. Thus, from 1836 to the end of 1866 the whole cost of the three classes of vicinal roads had been 18,961,488 francs, of which the state had contributed but 222,396 and the department 3,945,530, while over 14,000,000 came from the communes. In 1893, 1,808,763 francs were set aside in the departmental budget for the vicinal service, nearly half of it being communal or private contributions.

In 1867, M. Maurel, the then Chief Commissioner of Roads, said, in an official report, referring to the finishing of the whole system of ordinary vicinal roads, "The communes will probably never be in a condition to accomplish the immense task which they have undertaken to perform." This task was to be the building and keeping in order of nearly eighteen hundred miles of roads, of which only about three hundred and forty were then done, leaving fourteen hundred and fifty still to be built. Then, supposing this accomplished, he added, "it will next be necessary for the communes to provide funds to keep these roads in repair. But this will be impossible;" for, he goes on to say, this would call for an annual expenditure of 855,000 francs, which, according to M. Maurel, was more than the department could afford. So, in order to keep within the permissible limit, 690,000 francs, not only could there be no further extension of the vicinal system, but even the portion already constructed would have to be considerably reduced. Such was M. Maurel's rather discouraging view of the situation in 1867.

But at the end of December, 1891, when the last report was made, over twelve hundred and sixty miles of these ordinary vicinal roads were done, with eleven hundred and seventy-five miles still awaiting completion. It will thus be seen that instead of lessening the task, as M. Maurel declared in 1867 would have to be the case, it had been considerably increased. Thus, in 1867 the total length was to be some eighteen hundred miles; in 1891 it had been extended to two thousand four hundred and thirty-five. In 1867 a little over a fifth

of the total had been finished, while in 1891, although the total had been increased more than a quarter, over a half was built.

At the end of 1866 the department contained over fifteen hundred miles of completed vicinal roads of the three classes, and over five hundred more all graded and ready for stoning, provided with five thousand eight hundred and thirty-one culverts, one hundred and ninety-two bridges, and over fifty thousand yards of wall. It was then estimated that it would require over 17,000,000 francs to complete the work, there remaining to be built a little over one-half of the whole system. To-day the end is within sight; when it is reached the Tarn will have some four thousand miles of vicinal roads: adding to this the two hundred miles of national and the five hundred and sixty miles of departmental roads, we obtain the magnificent grand total of four thousand seven hundred and sixty miles of macadamized highway.

But the good work does not end here. Once graded, bridged, and stoned, a road—at least the wider ones—must be lined with trees, planted at regular distances and cared for almost as if in a private park. The total possible length of the Tarn departmental roads which could thus be planted is nearly four hundred and thirty miles, about one hundred and twenty of which are provided with forty-two thousand seven hundred and eleven trees,—buttonwoods, acacias, lindens, poplars, ashes, and elms.

Still another improvement remains, even when the road-bed is in perfect order and lined on both sides with flourishing trees. The highways are being continually straightened, curves made less sharp, hills cut down, etc. Thus, the "Table of Rectifications" of the Tarn departmental roads for 1892 contained eleven different modifications, involving an outlay of 430,000 francs.

One more trait of the Tarn road-building calls for a word. The honest and economical way in which the money is spent cannot be too highly praised. Read this passage, for instance, in the Chief Commissioner's Report for 1894: "At the approaches to the village of Blan, the wood on the slopes has been cut and sold at auction. The money thus obtained might be used to buy up the buildings which jut out too far where the road passes through Puylaurens." In 1889 the department made a loan of 500,000 francs to macadamize completely certain portions of the departmental roads. The cost of the work done up to the end of 1893 showed a saving of 71,454 francs on the estimates. Examples of this kind might be multiplied.

Theodore Stanton.

AT SUNSET.

FROM out the gardens of the sun the west wind blows,
 The wanton west wind, wild and free,
 And, lo! the petals of a rose
 Are strewn upon the sapphire sea.

Martha T. Tyler.

THE TRAIN FOR TARROW'S.

"CHANGE cars for Tarrow's Junction; all points north 'n' east." The door flew open with a puff of smoke and chill air, and several passengers left the train. The first was a gentleman wearing a travelling-cap and ulster, and behind him came a dark-eyed lady, whose well-gowned figure was partly covered by a fur cape. She carried a book and a little bag, and he had a rifle in a cover.

"It is abominable that I did not think there might be a change in the schedule," he said, assisting her to the platform: "two hours in this beastly hole is no joke. I am very sorry, my dear."

"I am not," she said, brightly. "As we sent the luggage ahead yesterday, we shall simply enjoy everything as it comes along. All will be snug and ready for us this evening, and then you will have all the shooting you want, and I shall have you for a whole week. Just fancy!" She laughed delightedly.

"And in the mean while——" He paused to look for a cigar.

"In the mean while you go and smoke, and do as you please, and I shall study nature."

"Humph!" Her husband glanced doubtfully at the desolate, gray landscape as he struck a match.

"Human nature, I mean." She looked furtively at a figure following them. It was the figure of a small woman who, when they left the train, had stepped hesitatingly aside, as if accustomed to having others take the initiative. She was dressed in black, and there was a bunch of lilac flowers above her rather faded little face. She carried a green plaid shawl and a bag, and looked anxiously up and down the platform.

The lady paused in the door of the waiting-room and murmured to her husband,—

"She is expecting him."

"Whom?"

"*Him*. That is all I know. She has been brushing off her dress and settling her bonnet for miles, and her gloves are perfectly new."

Her husband laughed and threw the match away.

"I doubt if you find anything either tragic or romantic there. Very limited material, indeed. Well, I shall stroll about for a while."

She nodded and entered the waiting-room, and a few moments after the little woman followed her. The dark-eyed lady sat on one of the benches which stretched around the bare room. Her book was open, but her eyes scanned the dull, leafless landscape out of the opposite window. The other woman entered and seated herself across the room in a half-deprecating way, as if taking advantage of a luxury provided for some one else. She deposited the bag and shawl beside her, and crossed her black-gloved hands in her lap, only to unclasp them again to fold and unfold a clean pocket-handkerchief.

The lady bent her eyes upon her book, and there was utter silence,

save for the tapping of the telegraph in the office, which served only to intensify the stillness. Presently the dark eyes of the lady were again lifted to the other occupant. She, the little woman, was working on the fingers of her gloves, which were painfully new and difficult. Over her head, a flaming poster in blue and scarlet announced that Mademoiselle Veronica, the world-renowned Queen of Aerial Exploits, would walk a wire from the pinnacle of a certain tent of a certain circus on a certain May day of a year gone by. It was accompanied by a gorgeous picture of Mademoiselle in an impossible attitude and supernatural habiliments. As the lady mechanically scanned this poster her eyes met those of the little woman beneath it. They were blue eyes, and pretty, although not very young. They were pleading, too, and accompanied by a very delicate color which stole unexpectedly into her face.

"A little spinster, who has lived her life in one corner," thought the lady. At the instant the woman spoke.

"Could you tell me—I thought maybe you could tell me what time the next train for Tarrow's comes, ma'am?"

"I am sorry, but I cannot," was the answer; "but they can tell you at the office."

The little woman went to the office window and meekly repeated the inquiry.

"Not for an hour or more," she said, returning. It was said appealingly, and the lady closed her book and remarked,—

"Waiting is always trying."

The other clasped her black-gloved hands on her lap.

"Yes," she said, "it's mighty hard, to-day especially. I just came down from Tarrow's, and I thought there was a train going back that nearly met ours."

"Came down to go right back!" thought the lady, but aloud she said, "An hour will soon pass, and you will not be late getting home."

"Oh, I'm not going back home, ma'am. I mean——" The woman stopped, as if she had said too much, and the color suffused her face. She added, "I live at Tarrow'sville, but I'm only going as far as the Junction,—me and a friend of mine."

"*He!*" thought the lady. Then, noticing the restlessness of the other, she again took pity upon her. "We are going on the Down East train for a few miles," she said,— "such a short distance that it seems scarcely worth waiting for."

"And *we* are going on the train for Tarrow's to meet the Northern Express," said the other, with an accent which did not escape her listener. There was an increased consciousness and color, which, being interpreted, said "the train for Paradise."

"Ah? You and your friend?" remarked the lady.

"Yes, 'm, me and my—friend."

Then there was a long silence, broken only by the tapping of the telegraph, and the lady again bent her eyes upon her book. Presently she became conscious of the gaze of the other occupant. The little woman evidently had something on her mind and wanted to get it off; yet she did not look like a voluble person.

"Unnerved at the prospect of travelling," thought the lady. "I wonder how it feels never to have been anywhere or to have seen anything." Aloud she said, pleasantly, "I suppose there is very little travel along here at this season?"

"I suppose so, 'm," said the other. "It has been a long time since I had any call to go this far from home, and it's mighty changed. I was going to ask you if you know how long it takes to get to Canada."

"Canada!" The lady paused in surprise. "Yes: it will take you about two days."

"I thought so, 'm. It's a mighty long ways." The woman spoke a little wistfully.

"Not with a pleasant companion," said the lady. At this the expression of the other changed. She grew wonderfully young and expectant. She looked down at her gloves, and then up, and, with an irrepressible burst of confidence, said, eagerly,—

"He's mighty pleasant. He always was; mighty companionable."

"That is nice," said the lady, gently, and then, with a strange feeling of interest in spite of herself, she found herself furtively studying this little spinster with the child-like face. The result of the scrutiny was this. She closed her book on one finger, and, settling herself comfortably, said, persuasively,—

"It is always pleasant to meet an old friend from whom you have been separated so long."

"Yes, 'm. 'Most thirteen years," said the woman. The lady's dark eyes lingered on hers in a way that may have been new to one who perhaps had led a solitary life, who perhaps had not reached far enough out of that life to mistrust sympathy, or who perhaps saw something in the dark eyes to which she was not accustomed, and which to her timid nature may have seemed the necessary hand held out for her reach. At any rate, she arose as if to cross the room, when the door opened, and she sat down again. A man entered, and, with a careless glance around, went to the office window. He was young, and evidently a preacher, and through the half-opened door the lady saw a horse standing tied.

"Any one been asking for me, Jacobs?" he said to the man at the office.

"No, sir."

"What time is the next train to Tarrow's due?"

"Schedule's changed, sir. Not due for an hour yet."

"Ah? Then I will return."

He went out and closed the door, and the lady marked that the woman opposite had shrunk back in her seat with head turned away as if she did not wish to be recognized. The minutes dragged by, and the little woman became more and more nervous and excited as they passed. At length she rose and walked to and fro, gazing out of the window. Her face was pink and her blue eyes were bright, and by and by, at the sound of an approaching train, she stood still with her hand upon her heart and no effort to conceal her excitement.

"Limited Express!" called the guard.

A moment later, a big, burly man, with a florid face, entered hur-

riedly and looked around. Then their eyes met. There was an instant of indecision, and he strode forward with hands outstretched. She met him half-way with a little cry :

"Oh, it's you! It's you?"

"Annie!"

The exclamation was simultaneous.

Then he held her hands and looked at her.

"And not a day older than when I left her, I swear!"

The woman's eyes were full of tears, and amid the united exclamations and whispers of both the lady discreetly bent her own upon her book. When she again looked up they were standing before Mademoiselle Veronica, and the man was saying,—

"I'll explain it all when once we are off. I couldn't arrange it any other way. You haven't talked about it?"

She shook her head, hanging on his words with the simplicity of a child.

"No: I did just as you told me."

He closed his watch with a snap.

"We haven't a minute to lose. You say he's been in here? Sure?"

She nodded.

"Then I'll go look him up." He abruptly left the room, and the lady, opposite, smiled in sympathy as she met the eager eyes of the woman, who was still standing.

"It's mighty strange to see him without a beard," she said, simply. "He's always worn one. But it's just the same to me."

The lady nodded comprehensively, and she continued,—

"You see, 'm, we kept company for ever so long——" She stopped as the door flew open and the big man bustled in, followed by the young preacher.

"It is very unusual, sir," he was saying. "When I received a note requesting me to meet a party here, I imagined it was an occasion of mourning. I——"

"Of course, of course," broke in the man, whose abrupt, nervous manner contrasted strangely with his burly appearance. "Of course it's an unusual case, sir; circumstances make it so. You, being a newcomer in these parts, don't know her, I reckon; but she's lived in this circuit all her life; and here's the special license." He handed the preacher a paper. "Now all we ask of you, sir, is to marry us right away, please." He paused, and wiped his brow as if under the stress of some great excitement.

The preacher examined the license and said, "This is quite right, sir. But have you witnesses?"

"Oh, by thunder!" The man whirled around, while the small woman clasped and unclasped her hands nervously. He turned towards the office, but it was closed, the clerk having gone to dinner. Then he strode over to the lady. "Madam, could you witness our marriage? It's asking a lot, but the train for Tarrow's comes in fifteen minutes. Maybe I can hunt up somebody else outside."

The lady rose, went across the room, and said to the little woman,—

"You would like me to?"

"Oh, ma'am, if you would be so good!" And, the blue eyes being more appealing than the words, the lady turned to the man, saying,—

"Then I will, with pleasure. Perhaps you can find my husband——" But the man had rushed out of the door. The young preacher was examining the license, while the lady, catching a breath of excitement from the unusual proceedings, drew the little woman aside and brushed off her gown and straightened her bonnet.

"I am glad I can help you," she said, with a sudden thrill akin to pity, as she met the child-like, expectant gaze of the other.

"Yes, 'm," said the woman. "He told me it had to be done this way. He's come so far, an's in such a hurry to get on to Canada, and we'll just make the northern train up at the Junction. He's got business waiting. You see, 'm, we kept company a good while before he went to Texas to live, and he always said he'd come sometime, when he could: so I just waited."

The last words were pathetic in their determination, and gave the lady listening a strange feeling of tenderness. At the moment her husband entered, accompanied by the man, who strode forward and stood beside the little woman, saying to the preacher,—

"Now, sir, right away, please."

Smiling at her husband's amazement, the lady whispered a few words in his ear.

"But are you sure——" he began.

"I'm sure of nothing," she murmured back, "except that the little creature has waited thirteen years to get married, and is ecstatically happy." She smiled up at him, and he nodded, and at a word from the preacher they drew near. A moment later the solemn words of the marriage service were uttered before the flaming poster of Mademoiselle Veronica:

"I require and charge you both, as ye will answer at the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed, that if either of you know any impediment . . . ye do now confess it. . . ."

In the slight pause following, the muffled sound of the telegraph was impertinent. A train dashed into the station, and the keen eyes of the lady marked that the man who was being married started and shook all over with a sudden tremor. Through the even tones of the preacher's voice broke the sudden loud tramping of feet and a harsh laugh. The door flew open.

"Here he is!"

"Aha!"

At the exclamations the man dropped the little woman's hand and threw his own outward, stopping the words on the preacher's lips.

"Wait!"

The word was a challenge, an appeal, a command, all in one. His face was ashen, and his eyes were fixed wildly, defiantly, upon two men who stood in the door-way, one of whom started forward and stopped short at sight of the strange group before him.

"Wait!"

"Too late for waitin' now. We've lost time enough already, owin' to your beard bein' gone.—Beg your pardon, sir"—this to the preacher,

who was dumb with amazement. The speaker made a gesture to the one behind him, and there was the sharp clanging of metal.

The man turned a livid face as they approached. "You've got me," he said, hoarsely. "Can't you stay back a minute? Don't you see *her*?"

He defiantly seized the hands of the little woman, who held his sleeve in dumb, piteous amazement. "Annie, don't you see? Don't you understand?" He uttered a sharp exclamation, half-a sob, under his breath. "I'd rather die right here than to have dragged you into it. I thought I was safe; I thought I could make it all up to you in a new life, and you need never have known——"

"I—don't—understand," she murmured.

He tried to speak, and failed. Then he said,—

"I hit a man down yonder. I didn't mean to kill him. It's easy to do it down there. I meant to do right by you,—I swear it——" He broke off with a groan and pushed her from him. "Go! go home, Annie, and try and forget it. Thank God you're not married!"

He wheeled around, but she caught his arm.

"Hurry up," said one of the officers. "Southern train's nearly due."

The little woman seemed to gather all her scattered force. She clung to his arm.

"I'd rather be," she said; "I'd rather!" He shook his head. At the instant a whistle sounded, and both men sprang forward. There was a sharp sound, a click, and he wheeled rapidly out between the two officers, without looking back, and the door slammed behind them.

The woman stood, white and still, while a train rushed into the station, stopped, and dashed out. Then she turned as if dazed, and sat down before the poster of Mademoiselle Veronica. The lady, who had stood helplessly by, motioned to her husband, who took a flask and tumbler from their bag, but the little woman put it aside with a gesture, and, leaning forward, spoke to the preacher.

"I'm sorry, sir; I can't take it quite in yet,—but he says he didn't mean to do it, sir, and if he says so, he didn't."

Then she leaned her head back against the poster and closed her eyes. The lady made a gesture to her husband, and he drew the young preacher out of the room.

Presently the woman opened her eyes.

"I guess my train's 'most due." She spoke mechanically.

"I wish we were going the same way," said the lady, gently taking her hand. "I am so sorry! so sorry!"

"Thank you, ma'am," said the little woman. "I'm used to being lonesome."

She opened her bag and took out a pair of thread gloves and began to draw off the kid ones with fingers that still shook.

"I reckon these'll do to go back in," she said. "The others were for the weddin'-journey."

Then she gathered up the green shawl and arose.

"Train for Tarrow's!" shouted the guard, putting his head in the

door. The clerk entered the office jauntily humming a tune, all unaware of the tragedy played while he ate his dinner, and the two women went out and crossed the platform together. As the train approached, the lady, who had laid a pitiful, caressing hand on the arm of the other, exclaimed,—

"Oh, can I do nothing for you?"

"No, 'm," said the little woman. She looked like one who had not quite awakened, but as she mounted the steps she turned a pale little face, out of which the last trace of youth and expectancy had vanished. "I'll just go back again," she added, and disappeared in the car.

The lady turned away, and met her husband on the platform. She clung to his arm without speaking, and her eyes were blind with tears as the train for Tarrow's rushed out of the station.

Virginia Woodward Cloud.

THE KING OF ROME.

"GENTLEMEN, I present to you the King of Rome."

Thus was Francis Charles Joseph Napoleon, King of Rome and heir of France, introduced by his father the Emperor to the courtiers and statesmen assembled at the Tuileries on the 20th of March, 1811.

Down on their knees fell the assembled household, and from their voices rang out the greeting, "Long live the Emperor! Long live the Empress! Long live the King of Rome!" The baby in its father's arms returned their cheers with a feeble wail.

Outside the palace gates in the garden of the Tuileries waited an impatient throng, listening for the booming of the cannon which should announce the birth of a son or of a daughter. Twenty-one salutes would tell them of a girl, but one hundred and one reports would proclaim the new-born child an heir to the throne of France. From the moment the first gun was fired, complete silence reigned, and eagerly each person counted the number of salutes. As the twenty-second report boomed forth, a cheer rose from the crowd that almost drowned the rest of the firing.

Their enthusiasm knew no bounds. They cheered and shouted, and the excitement affected the Emperor as no victory or glory had done before. Napoleon stood upon a balcony above the people, and the tears streamed from his eyes. Constant says of this event, "Never had his glory brought a tear to his eye, but the happiness of fatherhood softened his soul."

A curious story is told of the birth of the King of Rome. When the child was born he was supposed to be dead, and M. Dubois, the physician, made every effort to bring some life into the cold, motionless, breathless body.

At the same time that doctors and nurses were working over this lifeless child, the cannons were ringing forth the proclamation of his

birth. It may have been the concussion and agitation produced by the firing that acted on the vital organs, for after the hundredth salute his senses became reanimated.

That was a sleepless night for the inhabitants of Paris. Men, women, and children walked the streets, shouting the good news to each other, or pausing to drink the health of the new king. From the Champ de Mars was sent up a balloon which floated over the city and scattered papers to the multitudes, in commemoration of the event.

The city of Paris presented to the heir of France a wonderful cradle, designed by Prudhon. It was in the form of a ship, ornamented with mother-of-pearl and set on a ground of orange-red velvet. At the top of the cradle was a shield bearing the initials of the Emperor surrounded by wreaths of ivy and laurel; a figure of Glory overhanging the world held in her hands a crown, in the midst of which hung Napoleon's star. At the foot of the cradle perched an eagle with wings half spread, as though about to take flight.

The King of Rome was privately baptized on the evening of his birth, in the chapel of the Tuileries.

A few weeks later the Empress Marie Louise wrote to her father, "I am going to send you a portrait of the boy. I think you will see how much he resembles the Emperor. He is very strong for five weeks. He is very well, and is in the garden all day. The Emperor takes the greatest interest in him. He carries the baby about in his arms, plays with him, and tries to give him his bottle, but does not succeed."

About the same time the Empress wrote to her predecessor Josephine, "My friend, I have received your letter, and thank you. My son is big and healthy. I hope he will grow up strong. He has my chest, my mouth, and my eyes. I trust he will fulfil his destiny."

Madame Durand, first lady-in-waiting to the Empress, wrote, "The Emperor takes the King of Rome in his arms every time he sees him. He plays with the baby, and holds him before a looking-glass, where the Emperor makes faces for his amusement. The child is a merry little fellow, and likes his father's noisy caresses."

It is from such extracts as these that we get a glimpse of the softer side of Napoleon's nature.

Every morning at breakfast the baby king would be brought to his father, and the Emperor would dip his finger in the claret and let the child suck it.

At three months of age, on June 7, 1811, the public baptism took place, and the event was celebrated with great pomp. All Paris indulged in a holiday, and the people swarmed in the streets, where wine flowed freely from the fountains, and free performances were given at the theatres. At seven o'clock in the evening the church of Notre Dame was ablaze with light, and the Imperial procession entered. The cardinal grand almoner met the sovereigns at the door. They were followed by high officials and foreign representatives. The Grand Duke of Wurtzburg stood proxy for the Emperor of Austria as godfather to the King of Rome. The mother of Napoleon and Queen Hortense, who represented the Queen of Naples, were the godmothers. Other crowned heads who witnessed the ceremony were the King of

Spain, the King of Westphalia, Prince Eugene, Viceroy of Italy, the Duke of Parma, and the Duke of Frankfort. The King of Rome was carried in the arms of his governess, the Countess de Montesquieu. His baptismal robe was of silver tissue bordered with ermine, the train of which was borne by the Duke of Valmy, Marshal of France. At the close of the ceremony the first herald-at-arms proclaimed three times from the middle of the choir, "Long live the King of Rome!"

That night Rome itself was illuminated in honor of Napoleon II.

Alas! this child for whom all France was rejoicing was doomed to die in exile, unmourned by his country, and his last words were to be uttered in a foreign tongue!

Before he was a year old the Emperor had given him a body-guard of two regiments composed of boys not over twelve years of age, and all sons of men who had died in battle. One day as Napoleon was reviewing part of the Grand Army in the Cour du Carrousel, a battalion of these little foot-soldiers marched by. Placing them on one side and the grenadiers on the other, he turned to the latter and said, "Soldiers of my guard, these are your children. To them I confide the safe-keeping of my son, as I have confided myself to you. I ask your friendship and protection for them."

On the night before the battle of Moscow, as Napoleon was giving his last orders, a courier arrived from Paris bringing with him a picture of the King of Rome by Gérard. The Emperor, showing the portrait to his officers, said, "Gentlemen, if my son were fifteen years old, you may be sure that he, and not his picture, would be here among this host of brave men."

After the disastrous Russian campaign, and during the four months Napoleon spent in Paris, his greatest pleasure was the companionship of his son. Even if the Emperor was engaged in reading important reports or signing a despatch every word of which had to be carefully weighed, the baby king would remain seated on his father's knee or drawn close to his side. At times when important matters did not press him, the Emperor would lie upon the floor with the boy, and the two would play like children.

It was at this time that the child added to his prayers every night this petition: "O Lord, inspire papa with the wish to restore peace, for the happiness of us and of all France." Napoleon, overhearing this prayer, replied, "Ah, that is my wish."

The king was a noisy little fellow, and unusually talkative. Madame de Montesquieu once said to the Emperor that his son was proud and sensitive. "Proud and sensitive?" Napoleon replied: "that is what I like to have him."

Before leaving the Tuileries for the last time, on Sunday, January 24, 1814, Napoleon assembled the officers of the National Guard, and, coming before them with the Empress by his side and holding the king by the hand, he said to his soldiers,—

"Officers of the National Guard, I am glad to see you gathered about me. I am about to take my place at the head of my army. When I leave the city, I confide to you the protection of my wife and child, on whom depend so many hopes. I leave without anxiety, since

they are under your faithful care. Next to France, they are dearer than anything in the world to me."

Later he wrote to his brother Joseph, "In no case must you let the Empress and the King of Rome fall into the hands of the enemy. Do not abandon my son; and remember that I would rather see him in the Seine than in the hands of the enemies of France. The fate of Astyanax a prisoner among the Greeks has always seemed to me the most unhappy in history."

Alas! the order could not be carried out, for on March 29, 1814, the baby king left the Tuileries forever, and one month later was on his way to Vienna, where he remained until his death. As the child was being carried down the stairs by the equerry he struggled to free himself, and clung to the balusters, crying, "I don't want to leave home. I don't want to go away. When papa is not here, I am master." But the poor child was never master of his own fate. He was carried to Vienna, where, surrounded by every luxury and adored by his grandfather the Emperor, he nevertheless led an unhappy life.

After he had been at the Austrian court for a year, a messenger was one day sent to Paris, and before leaving he asked the King of Rome if there was any message he wished to send to his father. The child looked about to see if any one was listening, and then quietly whispered to the messenger, "You must tell my father that I always love him very dearly."

Notwithstanding the fact that the child was unhappy in his new home, he was still a jolly little fellow, and enjoyed above all things a mischievous practical joke. One of his chief amusements was filling his grandfather's boots with gravel, or tying his coat-tails to a chair. One day while walking with his aunt a goat appeared in the path before them; the archduchess was much frightened, but the little four-year-old Napoleon walked up to the beast, laid hold of its horns, and said, "Now you can pass. Don't be afraid; I will hold him."

In 1818 the Emperor of Austria published this decree:

"We give to Prince Francis Joseph Charles, son of our beloved daughter Archduchess Marie Louise, the title of Duke of Reichstadt, and we order that every one in addressing him, either in person or by letter, shall at the beginning of the discourse or letter say, 'Most serene duke,' and in the course of the discourse or letter shall say, 'Most serene highness.' Also Prince Francis Joseph Charles, Duke of Reichstadt, shall take rank directly after the princes of our family and the archdukes of Austria."

The name of Napoleon was taken from him, and his rank as King of Rome was gone. In their place he was made a member of the Austrian court and bore an Austrian title. It was a great transformation from being the heir of France, whose birth awakened so much enthusiasm, to become only the son of an Austrian archduchess.

The Duke of Reichstadt—for by this new name we must now call him—was taught German, much against his will. "If I speak German," said he, "I shall no longer be a Frenchman."

When he was about seven years old he came one day to the Emperor of Austria, and, leaning against his knee, said,—

"Grandpapa, is it not true that when I was in Paris I had pages?"

"Yes," answered the Emperor, "I think so."

"Is it not true that they called me King of Rome?"

"Yes, you were called King of Rome."

"Well, grandpapa, what does it mean to be King of Rome?"

"It is not necessary to explain that to you, for you are no longer King of Rome."

"Why not?"

"My boy, when you are a man it will be easy for me to explain the matter to you, but now I can only tell you that to my title of Emperor of Austria I add that of King of Jerusalem, though I have no influence over that city. Well, you were King of Rome as I am King of Jerusalem."

When Hummel was painting the boy's portrait, he asked what order should be painted in the picture.

"The order of the Holy Spirit, which was sent him when a baby by the Emperor of Austria," said Count Dietrichstein, who was the child's tutor.

"But," replied the little duke, "I have many other orders."

"You do not wear them any longer," answered the count.

"Why not?"

"Because they have been abolished."

In 1821, when Napoleon died, the duke's tutor tried to break the news gently to the boy, but he had scarcely spoken a word when the little fellow interrupted,—

"My father is dead, is he not?"

"Monseigneur——" the tutor recommenced.

"He is dead?"

"Yes."

"How could any one wish him to live away off there?" the child cried, and burst into tears.

An extract from Napoleon's will has this reference to his son :

"I recommend my son never to forget that he was born a French prince, and never to allow himself to become an instrument in the hands of the triumvirs who oppress the nations of Europe. He should never fight against France or do it harm in any way. He should adopt my motto, 'Everything for the French people.'"

As the Duke of Reichstadt grew older, Prince Metternich, one of Napoleon's bitterest foes, was charged by the Emperor of Austria to instruct the boy concerning the life of his father.

"I wish," said the Emperor, "to have the duke respect his father's memory, to take example from his great qualities, and to learn to recognize his faults, in order that he may avoid them, and also in order to arm himself against their fatal influence. Speak to the duke about his father as you would wish to be spoken of to your own son. Hide nothing from him, but teach him to honor his father's memory."

It must be supposed that notwithstanding the Emperor's devotion to his grandson he was aware of the irony of letting Metternich, Napoleon's enemy, instruct the boy in the "exact full history of Napoleon."

One day, about this time, an Austrian general was telling the little

duke who were the three greatest warriors of their time. The boy listened attentively, but when the general had finished he remarked,—

“I know a fourth, whom you have not mentioned.”

“Who is that, monseigneur?”

“My father,” the child replied, and ran out of the room.

During his lessons in French history with Prince Metternich the duke one day remarked, “The great object of my life is to become worthy of my father. I should fail in my duty to his memory if I allowed myself to become the plaything of factions and the instrument of intrigue. The son of Napoleon must never descend to the rôle of an adventurer.”

From time to time attempts were made by Frenchmen to communicate with the duke, but they proved unsuccessful: the boy was too carefully guarded. At length his countrymen began to think that the Duke of Reichstadt was as foreign at heart as he was in name and title.

In June, 1830, the duke went with his mother and the Emperor into Syria, and there he met the Chevalier de Prokesch, a distinguished officer who had travelled extensively in the East. The duke sat next him at dinner one day; after asking many questions, he finally said,—

“What recollection is there of my father in Egypt?”

The Chevalier replied, “They remember him as a comet which passing over a land dazzles it.”

“You are speaking of the people of higher education, of Mehemet Ali and Ibrahim Pacha; but I refer to the common people, both Turks and Arabs. I want to know what they think of General Bonaparte. They had to bear the penalties of the war. Do they not retain a deep resentment?”

It was this same M. de Prokesch who once said to the boy,—

“You have a noble end before you, monseigneur. Austria has become your adopted country, and you may by your talents render it immense services.”

“I agree with you,” young Napoleon replied. “My inclinations will never lead me to trouble France. I do not wish to be an adventurer. Above all, I will not serve as the instrument and plaything of Liberalism.”

On July 30, 1830, the following proclamation was issued from the Hôtel-de-Ville in Paris:

“Frenchmen, Citizens of Paris, the Bourbons have forever ceased to reign. We have just reconquered the Constitution decreed during the Hundred Days. Citizens of the Great Nation, we have justified the hopes of the Friends of Liberty and Independence. Let us finish our work. The Constitution of 1815 contains all our rights. No more privileges. No more nobility. Law, Equality, Liberty, that is our rallying cry. Napoleon II., the child of Paris and inheritor of so much glory, is our Emperor. He is the Chief of the Great Nation because he is its first citizen, because there is no longer any ‘divine right,’ no longer any nobility. He is our Emperor because to France alone belongs the right to choose her Head Chief, to make her laws, and to intrust their execution to Napoleon II. Brave citizens, have con-

fidence in your provisional government ; it is now busy regulating the glorious revolution won by your heroic efforts. Frenchmen, if we are united we shall be unconquerable. Long live Napoleon II. ! Long live Liberty !”

This document was of no importance, emanating as it did from some obscure source, and having no lasting effect. It is interesting, however, to note the sentiments expressed by Napoleon II. on the subject of Liberalism at the very time that he was proclaimed Emperor by the Liberals.

It was once intimated by Count Metternich that Austria might release the duke and then use him as a lever to overthrow Louis Philippe and the July monarchy.

It was during the summer of 1830 that Dr. Malfatti, physician of the duke, wrote,—

“The prince eats very little, and is without appetite. From time to time he suffers from throat trouble. He has a chronic cough. Dr. Handenheimer has already been very anxious about the prince’s tendency to consumption. I could not approve of his cold baths and his swimming. The prince was to have begun his military career in the autumn. He had just received a commission as lieutenant-colonel in an Austrian regiment. It was to this that all his hopes and ambitions turned. I did not, therefore, recommend myself to his gratitude by so formally opposing this change in his life. In a note to his august relative the Emperor I gave my reasons. I showed that in his condition of general debility, especially with his weak chest, any illness would be extremely dangerous, and consequently it was indispensable to protect the prince from all exposure to the weather and from all strains on his voice, which must be expected in military service.”

The Emperor on receipt of this note from Dr. Malfatti postponed the duke’s entrance into the army for six months.

“In the spring,” Dr. Malfatti continues, “the prince entered the army, and from that time he paid no attention to my advice. I was witness to an unmeasured zeal and a boundless passion for this new profession, which dragged his feeble body into privation and fatigue entirely beyond his strength. One day I found him lying on a lounge in the barracks, completely exhausted. He was not able to deny the miserable condition in which I found him, and he said to me, ‘I hate this wretched body, which cannot obey the will of my soul.’ ‘It is a pity,’ said I, ‘that your highness is not able to change bodies as you change horses when you are tired of them. But I beseech you, mon-seigneur, to remember that you have an iron soul in a crystal body, and that its abuse can only be fatal to you.’ All his thoughts were concentrated on his military exercises. He never rested. He continued to grow thinner, and lost all his color, but to my questions he always answered, ‘I feel perfectly well.’ In August, 1831, he was attacked with a catarrhal fever, but with all my supplications the only precaution he would take was to stay one day in bed.”

Towards the end of the summer an epidemic of cholera broke out in the regiment, and nothing could persuade the duke to leave his soldiers. He stayed at the barracks, exposed to the dreadful malady,

and Dr. Malfatti was beside himself with anxiety, for an attack of cholera would have been fatal. Finally the Emperor ordered him to Schönbrunn, where he improved somewhat in health. Every day he rode, and insisted on hunting. He implored the Emperor to allow him to return to his regiment, and once he was allowed to go back to attend a funeral. It was an intensely cold day, and suddenly, while giving his orders, the duke's voice gave out completely. On his return from the funeral he felt very ill, and allowed the doctors to be called. They found he had a high fever, which he confessed he had when he went out. Dr. Malfatti said, "It seems as if some fatal principle pushes this unhappy young man towards suicide." The duke continued to grow worse, and when occasionally he seemed to be getting better some fresh imprudence threw him back into a relapse. He lived through the spring and early summer, but suffered greatly.

At times the pain would wring from him cries of anguish, and once he called out, "Mutter, Mutter, ich gehe unter!" At that moment his mother came into the room. The duke greeted her with a smile, and, though tortured with pain, told her he felt better, and made plans with her for travelling in Italy.

It was on the 21st of July that the "iron will" at last succumbed to the "crystal body." Though brave to the end, the last words he uttered were, "My God, my God, when shall I die?"

Extract from the Paris Constitutionnel, August 1, 1832.

"Le fils de Napoléon est mort. Cette nouvelle depuis longtemps prévue a produit dans Paris une sensation douloureuse mais calme. Cette fin obscure d'une vie à laquelle de si belles destinées avaient été promises, ce pâle et dernier rayon d'une gloire immense qui achève de s'éteindre, quel triste sujet de méditation!"

Elizabeth S. Perkins.

INSIDE NEW GUINEA.

FACTS about the interior of New Guinea, "the least known portion of the habitable globe," are so scarce that Jean Théodore Francen van Gestel's observations there, made in a region untravellered by any other white man, are as valuable as they are interesting. That great land of flowers, destitute of beasts and birds of prey, practically free from poisonous serpents, and lying in tropical beauty along magnificent ranges of mountains almost directly beneath the equator, seems to woo the pleasure-seeker, to invite the explorer, if any land ever did. Strangely enough, although it is the largest island in the world, leaving out Greenland and considering Australia a continent, New Guinea is as yet in the main a *terra incognita*.

Surmise and rumor have supplied a mass of material which the scientist dare not accept, strongly drawn as he must be to study a country so unique in fauna and flora. Partial penetration by D'Albertis,

Maklay, Juckes, Wallace, Bernstein, Meyer, Raffray, and Forbes has thrown just enough light on the interior of Papua to make it most important to have more. The only white man known to have crossed the island from shore to shore, to have actually traversed the vast unknown interior and seen the aboriginal Papuans face to face in their native forests, is Van Gestel, whose additions to the scant sum of what we know of Papua are now for the first time given to the world. Sir William MacGregor, now the governor of British New Guinea, and one of the most progressive men in Polynesia, was, when Van Gestel crossed New Guinea, an obscure Scotch missionary, hovering in a fifteen-ton yacht along its southeastern coast.

Van Gestel, who is now a citizen of New York, was for many years one of the most active agents in that wonderful system of surveys which the Dutch government has made in its East Indian empire. Save Karl Bock, no civilized traveller has penetrated so far as he into the wilds of Borneo, that other great equatorial island, which is as yet so fruitful of travellers' tales and mystery. It was always for Holland, and not for himself, that Van Gestel made his journeys into those vague and fascinating interiors. He comes from one of the oldest and proudest Dutch families. More than one town in Southern Netherlands bears witness in its name to the antiquity of the family, which was ennobled by Charlemagne, it is said, in the eighth century. They were fighters all down the ages: one of Napoleon's guards of honor on the march to Moscow was of this stout old Catholic Flemish stock. The explorer of New Guinea is third in descent from the Napoleonic marshal, and entered the service of the Dutch government in Java in 1871.

It was in 1828 that the Dutch announced their sovereignty over New Guinea as far east as the 141st degree of longitude, substituting their rule in that region for the suzerainty of the Sultan of Tidore, their vassal. To Van Gestel a half-century later was intrusted the task of defining that sovereignty by determining and marking its eastern frontier along the line of the 141st degree. The importance of this work must be estimated from the vast extent of the Dutch possessions in the East Indies, and the fact that in New Guinea Holland had to contend, from the west, against Germany on the northeast and England on the southeast coast, each bent on grasping as much as possible inland.

The lack of positive knowledge of Papua is made plain by such conflicting statements as that of *Elisée Reclus*, a very recent authority in matters geographical, that the total area of the island is three hundred and fourteen thousand square miles, while *O. M. Spencer*, an even more recent writer on "*Picturesque Papua*," speaks of its "estimated area" as "two hundred thousand square miles." It seems reasonably certain that *Reclus's* estimate of the dimension "from northwest to southeast as fifteen hundred miles in a straight line" is confirmed by Van Gestel's field-notes of his survey. The character of such engineering work on a course through the heart of this continental mass, along which he was to be the first intelligent witness of the wonders of nature and of man alike, must be appreciated in order to prepare the mind for the surveyor's simple, unaffected narrative. He

believes, by the way, that New Guinea, Sumatra, Java, Borneo, the Moluccas, the Philippines, and Great and Little Sunda Islands were once embraced in one continent, peopled by a brown race, of which the Dyaks of Borneo and the Papuans of New Guinea are survivals, while Australia, New Caledonia, Tasmania, and Ceylon formed another homogeneous country, whose aborigines were black. Ethnologically considered, the Papuans are among the most interesting of the native peoples left on the face of the globe.

"*Pua pua* does not mean 'black' in the Malay language," says Van Gestel, "so far as I know that tongue, and I cannot subscribe to that derivation of Papua. *Ietem* means 'black' in Malay, and *poetie* 'white'; the Papuans are distinctly a brown race, never in any way to be confounded with the African negroes. That, too, in spite of the fact that De Retis, the Spaniard, in 1545 gave New Guinea its name from a supposed resemblance between its coast peoples and the negroes of the Guinea and Gold Coasts of West Africa. It was as long ago as the seventeenth century that the Dutch government took negroes from the Gold and Ivory Coast to Java and established them there as slaves. In return a colony of Malays was taken by the Dutch to their possessions in Cape Colony about the same time, and those Malays, who have for more than two hundred years preserved their racial identity, speak to-day the same language and wear the same clothes as their brethren far away in the East, having preserved almost intact the story of their transplantation. The strongly-marked negro faces observed among some of the coast tribes in New Guinea are in my opinion simply evidence of the dispersal of the Old Guinea negroes who were brought to the Dutch East Indies so long ago. The native Papuan, as I have seen him, averages but little if any more than five feet in height, has a brown but never an oily black face, a short flat nose, but never the curly black wool of the negro. The Papuan's bones are fine and thin; he is active in his movements and a good tree-climber. He is by no means a handsome fellow, however, as I will explain later on. Nor is he a negro.

"I started in 1874, from the mouth of the Fly River in the Gulf of Papua, on the south coast of New Guinea, to run the frontier-line. There was talk at that time of the annexation of New Guinea by the government of Queensland, Australia, and so the Dutch government resolved to define its possessions. I had been a civil engineer during the Franco-German war in Paris, and as soon as the siege was raised—I think I must have been one of the very first to leave—I went to Holland, secured a commission from the king, and started in his service to Java. I was commissioned to survey the island of Borneo (except the kingdom of Sarawak), Sumatra, Celebes, Minnahassa, Lombok, where there has been fighting recently, the Molucca or Spice Islands, and part of New Guinea. Such a task might well have daunted a man addicted to the pleasures of civilization, but I welcomed it.

"No one who has not visited that part of the world is likely to realize the beauty and luxuriant life of the Dutch East Indies. When Napoleon conquered Holland, England had gained possession of all these islands, as well as of South Africa, Cape Colony, and Ceylon;

but after Waterloo England exchanged Atcheen, the northwestern coast of Sumatra, for the Gold and Ivory Coast of Africa.

"There were plenty of railroads to build in Java when I arrived. A private Dutch company had already constructed one railroad from Batavia, the capital, to Buitenzorg, the residence of the governor-general, fifty miles away. I laid out a line six hundred miles along the eastern part of the island, from the ports of Soerabaya and Passaroewang to Malang, to convey coffee and tobacco to the coast. It was then that I became acquainted with those famous Javanese peaks, the highest in the island, Ardjoeno Gedee and Merapie. One summit of Ardjoeno I ascended over twelve thousand feet, and I am free to say that, in spite of the tales I have heard since then of the discovery of mountains in New Guinea thirty-two thousand feet in height (and equally fabulous, I believe, in other particulars), it is my impression that the Javanese peaks are higher than any other mountains in all New Guinea.

"I entered Papua with a detachment of a hundred Dutch soldiers, in their tidy uniforms of light-blue linen, and a band of as many coolies to carry supplies.

"I met William MacGregor, now Sir William, the head of the colonial government of British New Guinea. He was on a little fifteen-ton schooner lying along the coast southeast of the mouth of the Fly River. He had his wife and five or six Kanakas aboard, and he told me that he was there as a Presbyterian missionary, trying to enter into relations with the natives. MacGregor was then about forty years of age, I should say, a healthy-looking six-footer with black hair and a red face. His wife was a tall, fine-looking woman of about the same age, apparently. They had no children, and had been voyaging around in a little steamer which, when I saw them, he told me they had not long since sold in Australia. 'You'd better not go into the interior of New Guinea,' said MacGregor. 'The cannibals have just killed and eaten the wife and child of a pearl-fisher named Wilson, and a sailor whom the captain left behind to take care of them when he went out in Torres Strait. When the pearl-fisher came back to the mainland he found nothing left but a heap of bones.' To this I replied with a smile that I only hoped the cannibals would leave my bones too; but a more peaceable people I have never come in contact with than the Papuans. I was later informed that this massacre occurred on the coast of Queensland. Doubtless the canny Scotch missionary tried his best to discourage all Dutchmen from entering a country on which her British majesty had designs.

"So into the wilds we started, following at first the course of the Fly River, which D'Albertis, I believe, has ascended some five hundred miles. I soon found plenty of work for my coolies in building rafts to cross the numerous branches and tributaries of the Fly, breaking down the tall *alang-alang* grass, and chopping away the undergrowth. There were no dense forests along the river, but frequent overflows,—*bandjers*, the Malays called them,—which delayed our progress. There were alligators in the river near its mouth, but they were not seen after we had progressed inland: no noxious creatures of any kind, indeed,

so far as I was able to observe, are to be found in the interior of New Guinea. My men saw a few long green water-snakes and an occasional small python, but serpents were few, and no casualties came from that source.

"As I worked my way north from the Gulf of Papua, beyond the great flood of the Fly River, I could see far away to the east, two or three hundred miles, perhaps, a range of mountains whose sides were concealed by thick forests and whose crests were perpetually covered by clouds. The ferocious Papuan cannibals of whom I have since read may have inhabited those mountains; certain it is that I saw none of them. As I advanced into the interior, my course lay up-hill, through virgin forests.

"The trees—eucalyptus, acacia, pandanus, and many palms—grew to great heights, shutting out the sunlight for days together. In their shade no undergrowth was found, an occasional cactus and bunch of grass struggling feebly where the sunshine broke through occasionally.

"The interior of New Guinea is one vast mass of upheaved granite, without traces of minerals or metal ores, the strata tilted and piled topsy-turvy. Everywhere the work of volcanic eruptions is to be seen. Such a thinly populated region, considering the fact that it was an absolutely new country and that fruits and small game were so plentiful, I did not suppose could exist. The natives we saw from time to time, at a distance mostly; they never molested us. Their heads were flat on top, with long, curly, black hair; they went entirely naked. Their buttocks extended out eight and even ten inches, this repulsive deformity constituting a fleshy support amply capable of sustaining a child in a sitting position. Nor was this their most marked peculiarity. Some of the nursing mothers threw their breasts back over their shoulders or under their arms at will, to feed the infant carried in a sling between their shoulders. The Papuans are a very unattractive race to look upon. In arms they were primitive to a degree that was astounding. They had neither bows nor spears that I saw, their only weapons being stone hatchets. Of the use of metals they seemed to be entirely ignorant. In the dry season they made their homes in caves, which they found or excavated for themselves. Some of these cave-dwellings I visited, discovering fragments of their repasts, and occasionally a broken stone axe. In the rainy season they live high in the trees, where they build rude houses of sticks laid around and intertwined with the branches, thatched with dried *alang-alang*, and reached by shaky-looking stick-ladders. I have always been at a loss to see what ethnologists find so interesting in the Papuans, that the stuffed skin and the skeleton of one of them should, for example, be exhibited as a great curiosity in a well-known European museum, where I have since seen them.

"Most startling was the solitude, the destitution of life and motion, in the great central plateaus, which we reached in our gradual ascent from the river-level. There were plenty of small creatures of the squirrel tribe, some of the peculiar pig-headed deer we have in Java, and an occasional little tiger-cat, rather handsome than hurtful-looking. That

was all. I saw in my whole journey, from the mouth of the Fly River on the southeast coast to Geelvink Bay on the northwest, not a single beast of prey, unless those pretty little spotted tree-cats could be dignified by that name. Not a kangaroo, of either the tree-climbing or grass-jumping variety, was seen, nor any of the dingos or wild dogs elsewhere reported. I did see a number of specimens of the great bat called by the natives *kalong*, or 'flying dog,' with its curious coat of light-brown hair and its wing-expanse of six feet,—truly a formidable-looking creature, but not hurtful as I found it.

"But of birds there is, I verily believe, a vaster profusion of more beautiful tints and delicate plumage in New Guinea than anywhere else in the world. They fairly flamed through those sombre forests, which but for their bright hues and sharp cries would have been funereally suggestive. What a paradise the interior of New Guinea would be for a naturalist! From the great cebu, which devours stones, and the cassowary, through all the species of peafowl and the bird of paradise, down to the cockatoos and the wood-pigeons, there were birds of beauty in never-ceasing variety and numbers. Small wonder that Wallace has enumerated in the northwest peninsula alone two hundred and fifty species and sixty-four genera peculiar to the Papuan zone.

"At suitable stations along the route I had the soldiers nail up on trees the Dutch flag and iron charts of the Dutch coat of arms, on most of which no white man's eyes have since fallen.

"When we reached Geelvink Bay, and realized that our task was finished, and that Holland's part of New Guinea was so definitely determined then and thenceforth that no other nation could lay claim to it, we gave a rousing cheer, and it must have been music in the ears of the solitary post-holder whom the government had even then for some years maintained on the coast. The poor fellow probably didn't see a friendly face more than half a dozen times a year. He lived in a block-house, watching the coaling-station for the Dutch war-vessels in those waters."

British authorities notwithstanding, Mr. Van Gestel says Dutch New Guinea is the most populous part of the island; their best known town is Dorei, on the Dutch mainland, at the entrance to Geelvink Bay. By an interesting coincidence, he met in Soerabaya, in Java, two years after his survey was completed, the daring young Russian doctor Miklukho Maklay, who has spent two years on the northeast coast of Papua and in its interior, studying the language and customs of the inhabitants of German New Guinea. That the news of Van Gestel's trip had spread among the natives was evident from what Maklay told the intrepid Dutchman. He said the natives told him of other white men who had come down from heaven into the interior, "all in blue like the sky," and with "long smoke-sticks which belched out thunder and lightning," but for which the intruders would have been attacked. These supernatural visitors, Maklay's informants are said to have reported, ate fire and spat smoke. The references to the light-blue uniform of Van Gestel's Dutch soldiers, to their guns, and to their cigars are obvious. It was of Maklay that Reclus said, speaking of the interior of New Guinea,—

"Long journeys are rendered extremely difficult and often impossible by the malarious climate of the coast-lands, the total absence of stations on the breezy plateaus of the interior, and the often too well grounded hostility of the natives, who justly distrust the white strangers coming with a revolver in one hand and a bottle of brandy in the other.

"To complete the work of discovery without friction, explorers are needed such as Miklukho Maklay, whose rule of conduct was to be ever discreet, forbearing, and truthful in his dealings with the aborigines, and who in the midst of imminent perils always remained faithful to his resolutions. But such heroes are rare."

And it was to Maklay that Tolstoi wrote that he had "demonstrated by experience that in every part of the world man is still human,—that is to say, a sociable being, possessed of good qualities, with whom it is right and possible to enter into relations on a footing of mutual justice and kindness."

Assuredly not less unselfish for his own part, and no less useful to his fellow-men, have been the explorations of Jean Théodore van Gestel.

John Paul Bocock.

CARROLL'S COWS.

THERE was once a painter, named Carroll, who discovered that he had a peculiar talent for painting cows. He noticed that whenever he painted pictures containing cows they were praised and he sold them readily. On the other hand, if he painted men or women, or even other animals, such pictures were scarcely ever sold and seldom spoken of favorably.

"I only seem to have luck selling cows," remarked Carroll one day despairingly to a friend.

"Of course," said his friend, promptly. "You know how to paint a cow." He put up his eye-glass and looked over Carroll's last picture. It represented a man and woman shelling peas. "Look at the drawing of that woman!" he exclaimed. "It's away off. And the man looks like a block of wood. Even the peas would give one indigestion. Stick to cows, my dear fellow."

These criticisms troubled Carroll, particularly as they came from a friend and he could not well be angry at them. He looked wistfully at the man and woman who had been industriously shelling peas in his studio for nearly three months. "I can't paint cows all the time," he sighed.

"Why not? Why not?" briskly objected his friend. "You can paint cows. The public want cows, and will pay you for painting them. It is clear to me that nature meant you to paint cows. Don't quarrel with your destiny, man. Why not cows? A cow is an amiable, intelligent animal, with an angelic disposition. Why this aversion to cows?"

Carroll did not continue the argument. He looked at the man and woman shelling peas. Then he looked at his old coat, and sighed, "Perhaps you are right."

When his friend had gone, Carroll thought over the matter for a long time. His thoughts were a mixed jumble of his pressing needs, his particular little gift for painting cows, and the strange infatuation of the public for those animals.

He was a plaintive little man, with not much general ability. The decision he arrived at was not a surprising one. "The wisest thing I can do"—he pronounced the words out loud in a solemn tone—"is to paint cows, and only cows, hereafter." But at this point a strange resolution shook his slight body, and he said, firmly, "But I will do one thing: I will learn how to paint the very best cow that any man ever painted."

In consequence of this resolution, Carroll began to study cows, in every possible way. He sat among them in the fields for days, watching their motions, attitudes, and little characteristic ways, as well as their shape, size, and general appearance. He studied the anatomy and physiology of the cow. He spent an entire summer in the society of a few cows, for the sake of observing the temper, disposition, and mental peculiarities of those animals. In short, he "soaked" himself with his subject to such an extent that his friends began to think him crazy, for he talked, as well as thought, of nothing but the animal which he had resolved to know thoroughly.

But the results of his study soon became apparent in the excellence of his work. His cows became famous. No collection, public or private, was considered complete without one of "Carroll's cows." He began to coin money. He got good prices for each cow he painted, and was never able to retain one in the studio for himself, to keep company with the neglected man and woman who still shelled peas upon his wall.

One day a stranger called upon him with a strange request.

"I wish to purchase of you," he said, "your latest picture, 'The Benignant Cow,' and also the right to copy the animal in wood or in anything else I please."

"If you purchase the picture at my price, you may do so, of course," answered Carroll. He was well dressed now, but his eyes had the same ruminating, gentle expression as of old. "For what do you wish to use copies of the picture?"

"I am starting a new dairy." The man drew a prospectus of his new dairy from his pocket. "Perhaps you, or your friends, will patronize us," he suggested. "I shall call it 'The Benignant Cow Dairy,' and I propose to use copies of your picture as advertisements."

Carroll looked a little startled at this novel use of his celebrated cows. "I suppose there is no objection. I paint my pictures to sell. Still—" He brushed some dust off his sleeve gently. "Take it," he said.

So the "Benignant Cow Dairy" was started, and did a flourishing business in a very short time. The picture of "The Benignant Cow" hung in a conspicuous place in the dairy, and the little wooden copies

of the "Benignant Cow" increased and multiplied until they were known all over the city. It is true that after a few thousand of them had been manufactured they ceased to look like the picture, or like a cow, or like any object upon earth. Nevertheless, they were known as "Carroll's cows," which made him still more celebrated and added greatly to his income from new pictures. Such is fame.

Still, this experience disgusted him somewhat. "I think," he murmured thoughtfully to himself, "that my cows have become, perhaps, too realistic. I think I will study hereafter more the spiritual nature of the cow. I will devote myself to the higher purposes of her being, and to the consideration of her position in the grand plan of the universe. The cow that I have so far evolved has found her appropriate place in a dairy. The cow that I will paint in future must have a more noble position. I will idealize the cow."

So Carroll began to study the inner nature of the cow, in order to idealize her. He considered her thoughtful, amiable, gentle, tractable disposition; her devotion to the interests of man; her steadfast adherence to duty in supplying the daily wants of the family in whose service she was held; her self-abnegation in giving her entire life to the good of humanity. With these points to start from, he gave himself to reflections on the probable mind and thoughts of a creature possessing such lofty attributes. And in his mind there gradually formed a conception of the gracious and exalted nature which the cow expressed by her well-known characteristics.

"This is what I shall paint in future," said Carroll. "I will no longer picture an animal suited for dairy purposes. I will show all men the true nature of the cow as I now perceive it. And I will paint it so well that men shall in future look upon the cow as I see her, and no longer according to their own foolish ideas."

So Carroll began again to paint cows. And, as before, it was not long until people began to perceive that a strange change had come over his cows. A group of critics stood one day before his latest production, "The Cow's Evening Revery."

"That cow has a most peculiar appearance about her eyes and forehead," commented one man.

"Cow? Is that a cow?" asked another. "Now——"

"What did you think it was?" interrupted a third.

"Cow? Oh, yes, cow,—of course. Carroll. Certainly. I see. Cow. But there is the most extraordinary expression of benevolence in the eyes. And the body has a confused indistinctness. That cow isn't standing upon the grass at all. She's floating in the air, beaming magnanimously on mankind."

Then they looked at the cow intently in silence for some minutes.

"Huh!" said the first man, shortly, at last. "Carroll's gone clean daft. I always knew he would. That comes of a man having only one idea."

Now, near by there stood a man, by name Shotwell, who was the friend who had at first advised Carroll to paint cows. He overheard the remarks of these critics, and waited about until they were gone, that he might have a chance to study the picture by himself. The coast

was at last clear, and the critics departed to write out in emphatic terms their opinion of Carroll's cow and Carroll's insanity.

Then Shotwell stood and considered the cow which Carroll had succeeded in idealizing until it did not look like a cow at all, but like nothing that the mind of man had ever before conceived.

"It looks more like an angel than like a cow," whispered Shotwell to himself. Then he shuddered, clapped his hat firmly upon his head, and marched down to Carroll's studio.

"Carroll," he began, abruptly, "I have been to see your picture."

Carroll brushed invisible dust from his spotless sleeve in his old dainty fashion. "What did you think of it?" he asked.

"I think, man, you are mad,—stark, staring mad. What upon earth do you call that creature you have painted?"

"Is it not a cow?" inquired the painter, looking with mildness at his excited friend.

"A cow? No! It is not a cow at all. No man living ever saw a cow like that. It is an angel you have pictured, and not a cow. The proper place for it is in a cathedral, with other angels. Who do you——"

"That is what I think," interrupted Carroll, with dignity. "Truly that is the appropriate place for the cow as I now behold her. A cow is an angel, Shotwell, and I never can paint her in future in any other way."

The little painter's tone was so earnest and sincere that Shotwell, after staring at him in horror a moment, dashed his hat upon his head again and rushed frantically out of the studio.

"It is all my fault," he said over and over to himself, walking wildly back and forth in the limits of his room. "It is all my fault. Poor little chap! Brave little conscientious chap! He must paint her as he sees her, indeed. But his market is destroyed forever, for no one but a fanatic would buy pictures representing a being that is a cross between a cow and an angel."

He considered the matter all night. He saw the difficulties in the way of urging Carroll to devote himself to painting other objects besides cows. He had a real regard for the little painter's sincerity, but he knew that such cows as Carroll would paint in future would be worse than useless for selling purposes. He must persuade Carroll, somehow. The responsibility was all his. As a painter of cows Carroll's reputation had gone forever.

"I must be very careful," he muttered to himself over his breakfast. "I must use diplomacy."

Later in the day he walked gently into Carroll's studio, and found the artist making a sketch in charcoal as a study for a new picture, which he intended to call "The Cow's Resignation."

"Carroll," he began, looking carelessly around the wall, but without taking special notice of his friend's occupation, "did you ever chance—— Oh, no; there it is. You never sold that little thing you did several years ago, 'Shelling Peas'?"

Carroll did not look up from his lining.

"No; oh, no. That was a failure, of course. I never succeeded, you know, at anything but cows."

"No? Well, I've often thought of that picture. Capital bit of color. Was speaking to a man about it the other day. Would you be willing—ahem—to take a hundred and fifty for it, Carroll?"

"It's not worth a quarter that," Carroll laughed. "Still, I did think once— Never mind. Nothing goes but cows, Shotwell."

"Cows? Of course. Well, I think the public don't care for cows as they used to, Carroll. Besides,"—with a burst,—“you and I—ahem—know, of course, that a cow is an angel, but the general public, you see, don't regard a cow in that light. I'm afraid your last picture won't be a success, Carroll."

A startled thought looked out of the little painter's eyes.

"Do you mean 'The Evening Revery'?"

"Yes."

Carroll was silent a moment.

"You don't think people care for that kind of cow?"

"They're beautiful, of course. And 'true,' certainly. But you've got to paint cows that will sell. That's the point."

"Yes, I see. It's awfully good of you, Shotwell. And if there really is any man that wants it, you may have that picture for twenty-five, and thank you too. But I will never paint another cow." The little painter spoke with dignity. "I will paint men and women again; and if I can only sell them for sign-boards, so be it. But I will paint them as I see them, or not at all."

So he did. He never became a celebrated painter in any other way. Perhaps he had used up that vital force he had in his rendering of cows. The little wooden cows set in circulation by the dairy company are still popular, and the dairyman of the "Benignant Cow Dairy" has since made a competence, and often expresses a grateful obligation to the painter who gave him the idea of his title.

And these same wooden "Carroll's cows" commemorate Carroll's best-known achievement. Such an uncertain thing is fame!

E. L. C.

THE HERITAGE OF THE MUSES.

CHILDREN of that great Light which fills the sphere,
 And of the Goddess with the shaded eyes,
 Dwelling on scenes long past, and passing dear,—
 Such are the Muses: hence their kingdom lies
 Neither beneath the noon nor midnight skies;
 A blended heritage,—to them belong
 The regions where the wistful daybeam dies
 And cloud-wrought, purple pageants richlier throng:
 Pensive the poet's lot, for twilight broods o'er song.

Edith M. Thomas.

DOMESTIC SERVICE.

THE great riddle of life as it is propounded to each housekeeper when she comes to her kingdom is, How shall domestic service be made an avenue of pleasure instead of a *via dolorosa*?

The varied experience of a quarter of a century of housekeeping, while it has shown me some of the shoals, has not taught me how to avoid all the rocks that lie in the housekeeper's way. But both experience and observation have shown me that we Americans are unique in our trials, or, at least, are so regarded by others, for there certainly exists a belief among the nations of the earth that we are the most ill served people in the world.

London *Truth* once offered a reward of twenty dollars for the most entertaining anecdote concerning American servants. I did not have the good fortune to see the selected specimen, but, judging by the stories with which I have been regaled without an offered reward, it may have been very droll, and very humiliating, too,—for why should our domestics comport themselves in a manner that sets them and us apart?

We are accused of resigned submission to insolence and exactions that no other people would tolerate from hirelings; but it is impossible for foreigners, unless they have lived long in the country, to comprehend that the kindly consideration with which we treat those who work for us is largely an outgrowth of our democratic institutions.

This kindness is probably good seed thrown upon rocky ground, for it is a conceded fact that the easiest mistresses are the most poorly served.

Does the reader remember three pictures, representing mistress and maid of the past, present, and future, that appeared a few years ago in an illustrated paper?

In the first the mistress says peremptorily to a servant, who meekly does her bidding, "Put some coal on the fire, Mary."

In the next, the young housekeeper, with most conciliatory mien, says, "Oh, Mary, would you please put on a little coal?"

In the last, the meek mistress of the future cowers before an implacable-looking maid and with a propitiatory air offers to put coal herself on both parlor and kitchen fires.

The first pictures are recognizable for their fidelity; let us hope we may never have to say that of the last.

In my own house I have tried Irish, Welsh, Germans, Scandinavians, and native-born Americans. The latter class are hard to persuade into household service, and in some respects they are a little disappointing when secured. They have too much independence to obey orders, and, from want of technical education, not enough of the right kind of ability to give satisfaction when allowed to act without direction.

I am disposed to think that the strong, pre-eminent feeling that

reigns in every American bosom, of being equal to every other man or woman on earth, is a serious bar to properly preserving the family relation as represented by mistress and maid. As an American I would rather have my own countrywomen in my kitchen than any others, but till they can be made to understand that service is not servility and therefore contemptible, and that housework is as respectable a business as shop-work, I fear I shall not be able to employ them, even if they should wish it themselves. Many housekeepers will agree with me in my conclusion.

We cannot be made comfortable by servants who show by words, looks, and manner that they serve us under protest and are boiling over with wrath and indignation because we expect them to do things we are not in the habit of doing ourselves. That probably is the rub with Americans, for they make excellent assistants, I am told, in farm-houses, where the wives and daughters work with them, and where they are treated in all ways like members of the family.

Their strong feeling of equality is not altogether an outgrowth of modern customs, for I can remember visiting, when I was hardly more than a baby, a great-aunt who lived in the western part of New York State, who apologized to my mother for having her two handmaidens sit down to dinner with us, explaining that they were American girls and would never submit to any other usage. I think my surprise must have been manifest in my innocent young features, for one of the "help" told me snappishly, during dinner, that I might stare harder if I put on specs.

Yet those self-asserting girls lived many years with the old lady, and one married a well-to-do farmer who has since attained political prominence.

No; when I mentally accomplish the process known as putting myself in her shoes, I do not blame the American girl for refusing domestic service till out of much trial and experimenting we have learned to make housekeeping a regular business, conducted with the system and exactitude that belong to any other business. The idea of co-operation is crude now, but possibly it may yet be found available for the heavier work of families, with a lessening of expense and an increase of comfort that will greatly lighten the burden of life.

The employment of colored servants is a matter of taste or prejudice. They have their virtues and their faults, like others of the class some one has called our necessary evils, and it can hardly be said that they are altogether satisfactory in every department, although as cooks and coachmen they are far superior to most of our employees in similar positions.

The question of Irish servants has often been discussed in all its infinite variety of aspect by abler pens than mine; so I need not dwell on their well-known characteristics.

Of the Swedes, Germans, and Danes, who are rapidly coming into the field, the general public are less well informed, because their employment may still be considered an experiment. The unacquaintance with our language of the newly imported is a most serious drawback, but those of them who have been long enough in this country to con-

quer its speech are found to be valuable servants. They are appreciative of kindness, anxious to please, willing to work, and not too tenacious of their privileges. But, in spite of this rather attractive synopsis of endowments, people are shy of employing these foreigners, on account of the ordeal of teaching them our work and ways; and, so utopian are the golden dreams these exiles have cherished before coming, they consider ordinary wages too small for the very inadequate service they render. A green Irish girl expects to work for a trifle: a freshly landed Swede has but one idea in her head, and that is "big money."

The demand for large wages is not based upon the idea of their own worth and competency, but is made solely because this is a rich country and they want some of the gold that is lying about waiting to be picked up.

After some weary months of perseverance in well-doing, the patient toil of an earnest mistress is rewarded in many instances by the conversion of the blundering, obtuse, raw material into a valuable servant, partially at least worth the trouble taken with her, and at last deserving of the good wages insisted on from the first; but the remuneration no longer satisfies her, and, acting under the advice of the fellow-country-woman who imported her, Hilda, Christine, or Anni (she is nearly sure to bear one of these three pretty names) rises on her merits and demands two or three extra dollars per month, because of her new accomplishments. Comply with the first claim, and shortly another is made, till soon a moderately economical housekeeper has to part with her treasure and begin the education of a new venture.

Naturally it is only a practical, well-informed housekeeper who can train raw recruits, whatever their nationality; and here is a good place to say that no woman, rich or poor, in town or country, is fit to fill a housekeeper's position in her own house till she understands the business in detail. Half at least of the woes of domestic life and the trials of poor service spring from the incompetency of the house-mistress.

From what silly theory did the idea ever come that it is sweetly fascinating in a young wife to profess complacently, "Oh, dear, no! I know nothing in the world about cooking or housekeeping"? Cherry lips and dimples blind one to the smallness of the mind that glories in ignorance; but, as a merchant or a manufacturer acquires technical knowledge before he enters business,—for he will hardly ask his clerks to teach him details,—so a woman should be trained for her profession, or else the lovely, helpless butterfly will develop into an unsuccessful old wife, bullied by hirelings and undervalued by the husband who thought her ignorance so bewitching before it affected his comfort and well-being.

It has been broadly hinted for a number of years that there is a league among house-servants which influences their extortions and encroachments. Whether this is so or not, it is true that liberty and the pursuit of happiness seem the objects of those we hire, rather than anxiety to give us satisfaction. Cooks advertise for situations where a kitchen-maid is kept; butlers, through the appropriate columns of the

daily papers, express an aversion to devote their services to a family which keeps no under-man; and so on.

There is resistance at first to the new departure of hiring servants to wait on servants, but ultimately they will carry their point by firm united effort, just as they have carried many another within the last fifty years.

In union is strength, and the power that consolidated agreement gives may be the employers' also, if at last we are driven to resistance. Most people are willing to pay good wages, and, if consistent with their circumstances, will hire people enough to do the work comfortably; and if servants (the word affronts those to whom it is applied, but no other seems to embrace the class collectively) will treat employers fairly, the treatment will be generously returned. It is not comfortable in any household to have the kitchen and the parlor at war.

In some cases where there is good feeling and a degree of intelligence, a plain discussion between the factions promotes a healthy feeling in the household; but such cases are not very common, and there is a growing feeling of discomfort between hirers and hired.

In one or two of the largest cities small clubs have been formed among married women whose means permit large establishments, for the purpose of regulating some of the trials of domestic service. A scale of prices is fixed upon for the domestics employed in their houses, and the rates decided upon are those which prevailed five years ago. So far as known, the applicants for situations with these ladies have not received the offer of reduced wages with applause, and have resented the conditions imposed, although the latter are not difficult, but dictated by a rational view of the wants of a household.

It remains to be seen whether these private leagues or the more general attempts at organization, like the Hearthstone Club of past years, will ever be effectual. Probably they will not alone, but they may have their value in supplementing such measures as training-schools for servants, and the still more important education of our young daughters in knowledge and fitness to take the helm when, with youth at the prow, they embark upon the matrimonial sea.

Mary C. Hungerford.

BIRD-SONG.

WHEN the first dawn-streak up the east doth steal,
The birds outburst with all their rapturous art:
Happy art thou if, wakening, thou canst feel
The same melodious impulse at thy heart.

Clinton Scollard.

THE HIGHWAYS OF THE WORLD.

CURIOUSLY enough, the earliest record of the existence of pavements harks back through the dim lights of antiquity to the empires of two queens,—Semiramis, Queen of Assyria, and Dido, the Phœnician princess who founded the Carthaginian empire. According to the records of Valerius Maximus, the paved highways throughout the realm of Semiramis were the first in use, but Isidorus asserts that the Carthaginians enjoyed the initial pavements of the world.

Certain it is that from the latter the Romans derived their first knowledge of the importance of good roads, for at a time when the Roman kingdom had not yet given promise of its future greatness as an empire the people of Dido's realm were luxuriating in marble mosaics for floors of dwelling-houses, and stronger materials were employed by them for the highways of commerce when the Carthaginians were the most important commercial nation in the world.

But the Appian Way of Appius Claudius, the worn blocks of lava in the streets of Herculaneum and Pompeii, over which the Roman chariots rolled into the past,—all these and other European, African, or Asiatic highways of antiquity are not to be compared for structure or durability to the great roads of the Incas. These tremendous causeways, built for the passage of imperial armies from end to end of the realm, constructed in the face of nature's mightiest protests, bridging chasms, joining mountains, tunnelling through their hearts, built from depth to height by sheer force of engineering skill, indicate by their colossal ruins to-day that the Children of the Sun were past-masters of the art of high-road construction. Mighty records of a race as these remains are, what other and mightier records might not have been preserved had the *quipus* only been supplanted by the alphabet at a time when the Incas were a dominant race and had a history to bequeath to coming generations! Had it been possible to preserve the historical cords, threads, and bits of string into which the records of the great South American nation were twisted with cabalistic meaning, we might be able to determine beyond question that at a time when Frenchmen and Englishmen were wallowing through next to impassable roads, the practical perfection of Inca highways was further embellished by flowering hedges and umbrageous trees.

The superiority of these ancient roads, constructed by so-called savage or barbarous nations, over those made by other and presumably more enlightened ones, is matter for wonderment. Even so late as the seventeenth century high-born dames and noble lords of Europe complained of Continental roads. Spain, thanks to a Moorish ruler, had a paved city, Cordova, as early as the year 850, but the city of London remained unpaved up to 1533. Such of the vehicles of antiquity as have been preserved to us in royal stables illustrate better than history can explain the condition of the thoroughfares over which they were designed to travel. These royal coaches were of fabulous weight, and the wonder is that any pavements could be constructed to withstand

them, or that in the absence of any pavements whatever they could by any possibility be dragged through the ruts of ungraded streets.

Good roads were the first weapons to be employed by civil authority against that old-time gentry who were called most appropriately knights of the road. Still more fitting would have been the term knights of bad roads, for with carriage-wheels up to the hub in mud, or exhausted coach-horses panting and trembling at the top of an ill-graded climb, every condition of road-robbery was at its best for the robbers. Descriptions of these adventures invariably place them in the thick of timber, or in the more remote and hence least cared-for portions of roads, where men on horseback had an immense advantage over any number in a coach. The same factor which rendered escape by flight impossible to the innocent also put pursuit of the guilty out of the question: so in every way the poorer the road the greater boon it became to the lawless.

Travellers in all Spanish countries will be struck by the appearance of small crosses set here and there along the wayside of suburban or country roads, indicating in a majority of cases the spot where a murder has been committed. In Mexico to-day whoever undertakes the journey by stage and mule-back from the capital to the west coast, with San Blas as the objective point of embarkation, does so at the peril of both life and limb, the one from organized banditti who infest the route, the other from the perilous condition of the roads, dotted here and there with commemorative crosses not calculated to raise the spirits of the passengers. There, as elsewhere, non-attention to the proper construction and care of these important factors in the commercial development of nations indicates third and fourth place in the communities of the world.

Tardy as the English seem to have been in realizing the necessity for paved streets and highways, English roads to-day and those of all English colonies may be cited as models of road-building. Just how much of an impetus this providing of easy facilities for communication between adjoining districts not otherwise accessible has given to traffic and commerce it would be hard to determine. Next to the suppression of dacoits in Burmah and the establishment of law and order, good roads have done more to civilize that country than anything else. They have, in fact, gone hand in hand with civilization there and elsewhere. This is true of India, of Ceylon, of Australia, of New Zealand, and of the South African colonies. Even cultivation of the fields seems almost secondary to the opening of these great arteries along which the heart-throbs of a nation may pulse without obstruction.

This is also true of France, and, so far as the writer has been able to judge by personal observation, in a lesser degree of French colonies. Old diligence roads throughout Europe, the old *caminos reales* of Spain, —who that has enjoyed those highways has not had cause to bless the foresight and industry which originally created them and has since kept them in repair? There pedestrian tours are possible, and it is a significant fact that the bicycle was invented by a Frenchman and perfected by an Englishman. There is no better illustration to be found of cause and effect than this fact: the existence of good roads created

the desire for better personal facilities for their enjoyment by individuals, and the "wheel" was the result.

Many and diverse have been the means by which good causeways have been obtained. In some instances, where places have been especially favored by nature, the natural soil, properly graded and drained, has formed the best of roadways. This is especially true of Singapore, which has of all cities ever seen by the writer the best average of good streets, formed of natural clay of a deep terra-cotta color, as beautifully rich in tone as the soil of central Cuba, making charming contrast to the luxuriant tropical foliage, and packing to a degree which renders them smooth and hard as a floor. Elsewhere many islands of the sea have ideal roads of coral reef, which in a way offer compensation to their inhabitants for the lonesome remoteness of their homes. These factors are not to be enjoyed by more favored dwellers on the continents of the world. To them the problem of good roads becomes a difficult one, hard of solution and accomplishment.

Of European cities Paris and London are popularly believed by travellers to furnish illustrations of the best and most practical form of durable pavements, with asphalt in the lead of popularity.

Our American capital has the reputation of possessing the finest streets in the New World, and what was once true of the pavements is still true of the width of the thoroughfares. But, owing either to scamped foundations or to the imperfect materials employed, the asphalt in use there and in other American cities leaves much to be desired. Nor can it be claimed that any roadway which in a wet condition at once becomes a menace to horses affords a practical solution of the paving question. No one who knows London "in season and out," however much inclined to appreciate the luxury of pavements along which returning shop-girls waltz to the music of some gutter band, and over which rubber tires reduce the noise of wheeled traffic to the mere clicking of horseshoes, can with humane heart advocate the use of a pavement upon which the faithful slaves of man so often meet with accident and broken bones.

In Australia various methods have been employed. In Sydney, for instance, it has been found that macadam is too often in need of repair, several different kinds of asphalt have been proved failures, and even bluestone cubes have worn out too quickly along the narrow streets where traffic is greatest. The municipal authorities have at last decided in favor of brick-shaped blocks of wood,—blue gum, spotted gum, blackbutt, and tallow-wood having been found best adapted to the purpose of all colonial hard woods. It is to be hoped that the residents of Sydney will not suffer in health from these decaying blocks as dwellers in other similarly paved cities have done. That wood will decay is obvious; and that any substance so porous may become a fructifying place for germs of disease seems equally beyond doubt. It has been proved that since the action of the National Board of Health after the epidemic of yellow fever in Memphis during the year 1876, when many miles of rotting wooden-block pavements were condemned and removed, the health average of the city has been greatly increased.

The secret of durability seems thus far to have belonged rather to antiquity than to modern times. Whether the composition of bituminous cement of a sort to outlast the ages is a lost art or not, the fact remains that all pavements of the past have been most remarkable for the care bestowed upon their foundations. Yet in some instances, described by Velasco in his "*Historia del Reino de Quito*," the foundations of the old Inca highways, built of solid masonry across deep ravines, have been worn away by the continuous chafing against them of mountain torrents until huge flags of freestone have been reduced and displaced and the ravine spanned alone by an arch of cement unsupported by any original foundation. Thus the composition devised by man has proved itself harder and more durable than the rocks made by nature in the slow alchemy of time.

But to the investigator the superiority of ancient roads lies not so much in material as in painstaking workmanship. The old Romans laid their *pavimentum* upon foundations varying according to conditions of soil from two and three feet in depth to as many more as were required to attain the desired result. These foundations were invariably placed upon a solid bed to begin with, and consisted of stones of various sizes placed in layers, well packed, and cemented with lime. Upon these repeated layers, any one of which received greater attention than many a complete modern pavement, were laid large blocks of stone or lava, carefully and accurately fitted together to make a continuous even surface, the whole forming a practically indestructible roadway, where frequent repairing was unnecessary.

Without doubt the heavy carting and drayage of modern times have much to do with the perishableness of modern pavements. The hardest rock itself cannot long withstand the continuous grind of heavy loads supported upon narrow tires. To this foolish and destructive fashion of building carts and drays designed for the transportation of great weights the bulk of failure in modern pavements is due. It must be remembered that these celebrated roads of antiquity were never subjected to similar tests, and that the smaller the surface called upon to sustain great weight the less, naturally, will be the resistive power offered, and the greater will be the pressure upon the point of contact. If any one will take the trouble to ascertain the weight of an average load whose like is hauled by hundreds through all our chief cities daily, measure the width of the tire, and then figure the pressure per square inch to which a pavement is exposed, based upon the fraction of a circle which touches a straight line, he will have a better idea of what road-builders of the present day have to contend with. This width of cart-wheels and tires should be regulated by law with a view to municipal economy, and each commonwealth should endeavor by legislation to enforce honesty in the laying of foundations for every foot of pavement used.

The practice of paving cities with vitrified brick is coming largely into favor in America, and Washington now has many Western rivals for the honor of being the best-paved city in the New World. Of the nearer West, Detroit furnishes a good illustration of the use of this old material. Certainly in point of antiquity the brickmaker's

art is one of the oldest in the world of which we have any record. According to biblical tradition, this industry was the cause of the curse of many languages which fell upon the children of Noah, for

"It came to pass, as they journeyed from the east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar; and they dwelt there. And they said one to another, Go to, let us make brick, and burn them thoroughly. And they had brick for stone, and slime had they for mortar. And they said, Go to, let us build us a city and a tower, whose top may reach unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the whole earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the children of men builded. And the Lord said, Behold, the people is one, and they have all one language; and this they begin to do: and now nothing will be restrained from them which they have imagined to do. Go to, let us go down, and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech. So the Lord scattered them abroad from thence upon the face of all the earth: and they left off to build the city. Therefore is the name of it called Babel; because the Lord did there confound the language of all the earth; and from thence did the Lord scatter them abroad upon the face of all the earth." (Genesis xi. 2-9.)

Herodotus records an inscription formerly found upon one of the pyramids of Egypt in the vicinity of Cairo: "Do not undervalue me by comparing me with the pyramids of stone. For I am better than they, as Jove exceeds the other deities. I am made of bricks from clay brought up from the bottom of the lake adhering to poles." According to Pliny, bricks made by the Greeks were sometimes seasoned for five years before being used, when some of the finest of ancient buildings were constructed of them. Croesus himself ordered his palaces to be made of brick, and some of the temples of Athens were built of the same material. That the Romans also practised the art of brickmaking is beyond question, with what success may be judged from the ruins of many walls still standing in Northern Europe and England, while the bricks in the baths of Titus and Caracalla have proved more durable than the stones of the Colosseum itself. Away over in Nepaul ornamental bricks especially adapted for architectural purposes are manufactured, while the Chinese claim to have discovered the process of glazing. Holland has long been celebrated for the quality and imperishable nature of its bricks, both for dwellings and high-roads, and the practicability of brick pavements has been demonstrated by the Dutch for generations.

Reading the signs of the times, vitrified clays are to form the chief factors of the future for paving purposes. It is essential in any climate that the material thus exposed to all kinds of weather should not be affected by it, should be impervious to moisture, should not be softened by extreme heat nor crumbled by extreme cold. Cheap to manufacture and to lay, easily cleaned, readily replaced if broken, absolutely non-absorbent, and therefore free from those dangerous elements which jeopardize the health of crowded communities, smooth, and yet affording easy footing for horses, there is much to be said in favor of paving-bricks.

All things considered,—youth and overgrowth, inexperience and carelessness, and, in the majority of cases, lack of opportunity to judge by comparison,—the United States have kept reasonable pace with other nations in the matter of roadways. There is an appalling territory to be covered, beside which the establishing of good roads in European countries seems like child's play. One of the chief troubles in America has been the rapid development of our tremendous railway system, which has absorbed the time, attention, and capital of men and companies who have given thought to conditions of communications between districts. Far-reaching and essential as this mode of conveyance is, it must be remembered that the finest railroad in the world in no way lessens the local need of good roads in the communities through which it passes.

While one naturally expects to find the greatest degree of comfort in these matters in the oldest settlements, it is a fact beyond dispute that the younger cities of the West are far better paved than Eastern cities generations older, while country roads in populous districts average as good. In no other matter do men so easily reconcile themselves to indifferent and inefficient service. The amount of discomfort endured daily in cities paved with granite blocks, for instance, is past computation. Irregular of surface, noisy, dusty, dirty, hard alike on horse and on vehicle, this barbarous system has had but one merit to recommend it: it is durable. Considering its manifold discomforts, this is rather a fault than a virtue. Other materials are durable, cleaner, more comfortable in every respect, and yet are vigorously fought against by partisans of granite blocks, who are jounced about in carriages and deafened by noise without realizing the degree of discomfort to which they subject themselves. No sane man would elect to wear a hair-cloth shirt because it was durable and seldom required change, for he would consider the many forms of creature comfort sacrificed to this sort of economy. Yet few people seem to realize that granite pavements are the hair shirts of communities, and that the day for mortifying the flesh has long gone past in civilized countries.

Good thoroughfares, like charity, should begin at home. On the day when each commonwealth, after careful investigation and satisfactory tests, unbiassed by bribery, preferment, or political affinity and reward, compels by act of law the laying of whatever form of paving has been demonstrated as best for city and country use,—on that day the millennium may be descried approaching. Then the American tally-ho coach will exist with reason, because of (and not despite the lack of) fitting roads along which to roll its picturesque expense. Parties planning pedestrian tours will not have to cross the seas to find a starting-point for their itinerary; country homes will be more sought for and more enjoyed; and the native American will begin to form an acquaintance with the undreamed-of beauties of his own land, based upon something besides snap-shot glimpses from a railroad train, and deepened into an interest and admiration made possible only through the intimacy begotten of good roads.

Marion Manville Pope.

HOW THEY DIFFER.

MAN is a creature of cast-iron habits; woman adapts herself to circumstances; this is the foundation of the moral difference between them.

A man does not attempt to drive a nail unless he has a hammer; a woman does not hesitate to utilize anything, from the heel of a boot to the back of a brush.

A man considers a corkscrew absolutely necessary to open a bottle; a woman attempts to extract the cork with the scissors; if she does not succeed readily, she pushes the cork into the bottle, since the essential thing is to get at the fluid.

Shaving is the only use to which a man puts a razor; a woman employs it for a chiropodist's purposes.

When a man writes, everything must be in apple-pie order; pen, paper, and ink must be just so, and a profound silence must reign while he accomplishes this important function. A woman gets any sheet of paper, tears it perhaps from a book or a portfolio, sharpens a pencil with the scissors, puts the paper on an old atlas, crosses her feet, balances herself on her chair, and confides her thoughts to paper, changing from pencil to pen and *vice versa* from time to time, nor does she care if the children romp or the cook comes to speak to her.

A man storms if the blotting-paper is not conveniently near; a woman dries the ink by blowing on it, waving the paper in the air, or holding it near a lamp or a fire.

A man drops a letter unhesitatingly in the box; a woman rereads the address, assures herself that the envelope is sealed, the stamp secure, and then throws it violently into the box.

A man can cut a book only with a paper-cutter; a woman deftly inserts a hairpin and the book is cut.

For a man "good-by" signifies the end of a conversation and the moment of his departure; for a woman it is the beginning of a new chapter, for it is just when they are taking leave of each other that women think of the most important topics of conversation.

A woman ransacks her brain trying to mend a broken object; a man puts it aside and forgets that for which there is no remedy.

Which is the superior?

Minnie J. Conrad.

IN SIGHT OF THE GODDESS.

A TALE OF WASHINGTON LIFE.

BY

HARRIET RIDDLE DAVIS,

AUTHOR OF "THE CHAPEL OF EASE," "GILBERT ELGAR'S SON," ETC.

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